

http://www.mywebtimes.com/opinion/letters/kasem-congress-needs-to-think-of-working-people/article_1261eca7-4e43-5a08-b2ba-e7a16ac3c3cf.html

MyWebTimes (IL): Congress needs to think of working

January 2, 2015

I am outraged that Congress continues to focus on passing tax breaks for businesses rather than effective tax policies for working families.

In September, the U.S. Census reported that one in five American children lived in poverty last year. You would think this would be Congress' top priority as they worked to finish the year. You would be wrong.

Instead, many in Congress are pushing for costly new tax breaks for businesses that will add to the federal deficit. Meanwhile, improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) for millions of low-income working families are set to expire. If this happens, 17 million Americans, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty.

I urge members of Congress to focus on enacting policies that help struggling families make ends meet. Specifically, I urge them to use any tax bill they propose to include protecting key EITC and provisions

that are set to expire. The campaign is over — it's time for Congress to get back to work for the working people of America.

-Shahed Kasem

(RESULTS Free Agent)

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/William-Baker-Connecticut-needs-to-repair-holes-6028071.php?cmpid=twitter>

Stamford Advocate (CT): Connecticut needs to repair holes in the safety net

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

Thank you for [Ken Dixon](#)'s article ("State's poorest contribute more than richest to tax coffers," Jan. 7) about how the state and local tax burden in Connecticut falls most heavily on those least able to pay. You don't need to be an economist to know that this is backward. Mr. Dixon's analysis showing that the households earning \$48,000 or less per year contribute almost twice as much as those earning \$2 million or more was an eye-opener. Part of that reflects extremely flat marginal income tax rates here -- at \$48,000 income the marginal rate is 5 percent while for any income over \$500,000 it is only 6.7 percent. Of courses, those at the bottom of the income scale also pay a much larger portion of income in the form of sales tax, which is very regressive.

I agree with Mr. Dixon and with the organization he cited, [Connecticut Voices for Children](#), that the state [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) should be restored to the pre-2013 levels. The state's budgetary problems should not be fixed by cutting assistance to the less fortunate among us, and the EITC is one of the most powerful programs helping people to lift themselves out of poverty. I urge everyone to call their state representatives and senators to tell them to correct that situation promptly.

The problem is not just in Hartford, however. In Washington, the last Congress specifically voted against making the 2009 improvements to the Federal EITC permanent. And some in the new Congress have talked about making cuts to that program and others -- the stage is already set for cuts to Social Security Disability Payments, and the food assistance program, SNAP, has been targeted. Congressman [Jim Himes](#) and Senators [Richard Blumenthal](#) and [Chris Murphy](#) need to hear from us all that we will back their efforts to prevent such a shredding of the Social Safety Net. They will thank you for your support.

[Bill Baker](#) of Stamford is a 35-year resident of Connecticut and a volunteer for RESULTS, an organization that works to eliminate poverty by addressing its root causes: lack of access to enough food, to healthcare, to education, and to economic opportunity.

<http://www.heraldnct.com/article/20150125/OPINION02/150129489>

Everett Herald (WA): Let's help people out of poverty

Columnist Eugene Robinson makes a powerful case for picking up MLK's work to end economic inequality. ("[MLK's message on economic inequality still fits](#).'") As we celebrate the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on his special day, a day of service, we can each do something about economic inequality. Contact your legislative representatives locally and nationally and tell them to turn this around. One specific is to support universal preschool for all Americans, so every child can be ready for kindergarten. Another way is to raise the minimum wage to a living wage so working full time can actually move people out of poverty. And the list goes on. We know what to do, we just have to let our lawmakers know it is a priority with our voices and votes.

Willie Dickerson
Snohomish

<http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/01/31/flint-water-michigan/22621041/>

Detroit Free Press (MI): Stop helping wealthy, start helping families

I'm honestly shocked that some of Congress continues to focus on protecting tax breaks for businesses and wealthy families, rather than effective tax policies for working families.

In September 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that almost 1 in 5 American children was living in poverty in 2013. You would think this would be Congress' top priority as it starts a new session. Instead, many in Congress are pushing for costly new tax breaks for businesses that will add to the federal deficit. Meanwhile, improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) for millions of low-income working families are set to expire. If this happens, 17 million Americans, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty.

I urge members of Congress to focus on enacting policies that help struggling families make ends meet. Specifically, I urge them to use any tax bill they propose to include protecting key EITC and CTC provisions that are set to expire. The campaign is over — it's time for Congress to get back to work for the working people of America.

Teia McGahey

Dearborn

<http://www.abqjournal.com/534882/news/poverty-programs-trap-the-poor-despite-best-intentions.html>

Albuquerque Journal (NM): Poverty programs trap the poor

By [Winthrop Quigley / Journal Staff Writer](#)

PUBLISHED: Sunday, February 1, 2015 at 12:05 am

(Jos: generated by RESULTS Albuquerque volunteers)

Charlie and Dee Ivy have been working to find solutions to poverty for many years. They returned to Albuquerque not long ago from Ethiopia, where they were part of a Clinton Foundation program. These days they volunteer with RESULTS, a Washington, D.C.-based anti-poverty organization.

The Ivys showed me a fascinating graph they developed that demonstrates how much existing government programs contribute to family income. Their point is that for many people income support is inadequate, assuming our society's goal is to build a decent financial safety net.

As we talked, the graph became a sort of Rorschach test; what we saw in the graph said as much about how we each perceive the problem as it said about government programs.

I saw a collection of well-intentioned benefits that provided incentives at certain marginal income levels to stop working. I saw complex programs that are difficult for intended beneficiaries to navigate and expensive to run. I saw a single, very simple tax-based solution to the safety-net question. I saw many political reasons why the complex programs, with all of their unintended consequences, probably will continue.

The graph accompanies this article. See what you make of it.

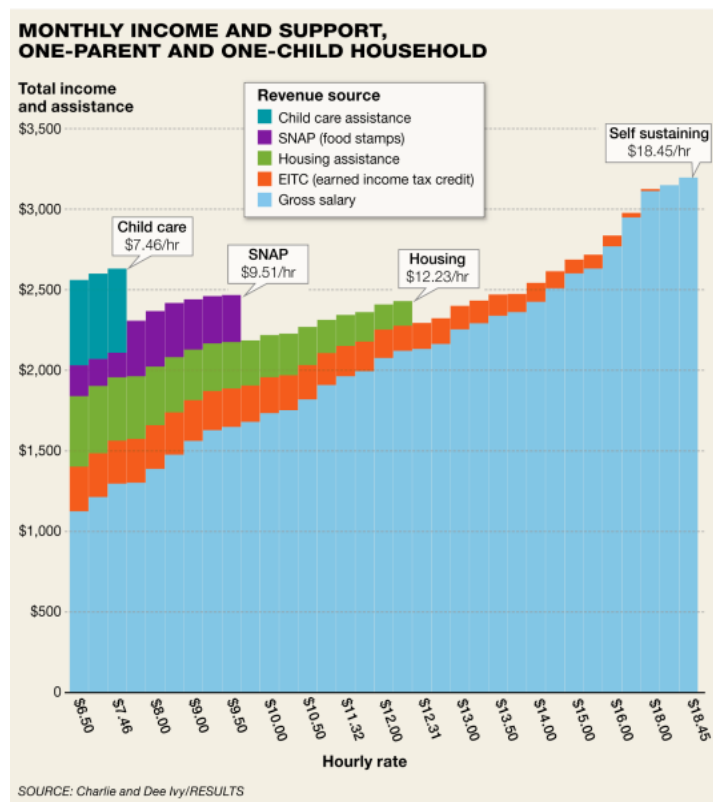
The graph shows how much support a single parent of one child gets in a month, depending on how much income she earns on the job, from four federal programs: monthly child care assistance, food stamps (known as SNAP), monthly housing assistance and the earned income tax credit.

Medicaid is a significant part of the safety net, but it isn't included in this analysis because its benefits don't slide with income. You either qualify for the entire Medicaid benefit or you qualify for none of it.

A parent earning the equivalent of \$6.50 an hour over a 40-hour week has monthly income from the job of a little more than \$1,000 a month. (The minimum wage is higher than \$6.50 an hour, of course, so this hypothetical parent, presumably, is working a part-time or temporary job.)

At that income level, federal programs are providing about \$1,400 worth of child care, housing assistance, food stamps and cash in the form of the earned income tax credit. The parent loses everything except the earned income tax credit once she earns the equivalent of \$12.23 an hour. The parent loses the earned income tax credit once she earns the equivalent of \$18.45 an hour.

You can see that once the parent earns more than the full-time equivalent of \$7.46 an hour on the job she loses monthly payments that help her afford child care. In effect, her monthly income from work and benefits is cut from about \$2,600 to about \$2,300 a month because she made more money working. She loses her food stamps once she earns more than \$9.51 an hour. Housing assistance goes after \$12.23 an hour.



What is even more insane is that the single parent has to earn about \$14.50 an hour and receive an earned income tax credit before she gets back to the monthly revenue stream she had when she earned \$7.46 an hour and received child care, food stamps, the EITC and housing assistance.

No doubt there are deadbeats who will avoid work whenever possible, but my own experience says nobody likes being poor, most people would rather work, and most people will try to improve their own future prospects and those of their children. That said, a rational economic actor has to ask herself if taking a slightly better-paying job is worthwhile when the cost is loss of government support that exceeds the value of the raise.

Each of these support programs has its own rules, paperwork and bureaucracy. Benefit levels from one program can affect benefits from another. It is work to run these programs, and it is work to receive the benefits the programs offer.

Three of them could be eliminated and the support they offer replaced with a higher earned income tax credit, one that declines as the family's income improves. Parents would decide if the support they receive is better-spent on groceries or child care or housing. The only overhead in running the program would be IRS administration, which is going to occur anyway.

Because there would be only the one tax credit to administer, no government agency would have to determine if someone is qualified for help. The tax credit is simply paid when a family's income is below a specific level.

Here is why that doesn't happen:

Politicians and bureaucrats often don't trust anyone enough, especially poor people, to let them make their own decisions about their own well-being when government money is involved.

Bureaucracies employ thousands of people. It's hard to imagine Washington eliminating those jobs.

People need cash right now, not when they file their taxes in April. Some mechanism has to be in place to release funds monthly.

Food stamp programs exist in part to guarantee markets for farmers. Housing programs exist in part to support the real estate industry. These are powerful business interests with powerful lobbies that benefit from the status quo.

<http://blogs.seattletimes.com/northwestvoices/2015/02/02/steps-for-congress-to-take-to-address-on-income-inequality/>

Seattle Times (WA): Steps for Congress to take to address on income inequality

February 2, 2015

It is wonderful that some candidates for president have recently “discovered” the issue of income inequality [“[Guess who’s discovered income inequality](#),” Danny Westneat, Jan. 23].

Since the Republican party is the current majority in Congress, it gives citizens a chance to see if they are serious about doing something about it. Extending the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit would show good faith, since they keep many Americans out of poverty. Passing universal pre-K education would help entering kindergartners have an even start at education, instead of playing catchup. Then making community college free would give young people a new opportunity to land good jobs.

All these could be passed by Congress right now, if income inequality really matters.

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish

<http://www.statesman.com/news/news/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-020715/nj6Bx/>

Austin American-Statesman (TX): Close wealth gap with EITC, other aid

February 6, 2015

Re: Jan. 31 article, “[PolitiFact: Top 1% of earners are doing well, thank you.](#)”

Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas is correct in saying that the top 1 percent now earns more of the national income than in any year since the late 1920s.

Congress can do something about this inequality. Congress should make protecting and strengthening the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit a top priority. Key provisions of these effective anti-poverty tax credits are set to expire in 2017; they are our nation’s most successful anti-poverty programs for children.

The tax credits enable low-income working families to make ends meet. Studies also demonstrate that credits like these boost children’s test scores, college enrollment rates and earnings later in life — all while incentivizing work and prioritizing family time.

MARTHA ROGERS, AUSTIN

<http://www.abqjournal.com/539376/opinion/talk-of-the-town-160.html>

Albuquerque Journal (NM): We can tweak current poverty programs

MANY THANKS TO Win Quigley for his column on the bind that many low-income people find themselves in (“Poverty programs trap the poor, despite best intentions,” Feb. 1).

As an example, any raise that brings income above \$7.46 per hour currently results in loss of childcare help in a one-child family, a loss of \$500 or so per month. A hard-earned raise should not make life harder.

Structural issues like this keep people poor, stressed and less productive than they could be. RESULTS, the anti-poverty group Quigley met with before writing his column, works on these systemic causes of poverty to build a country where our children can thrive.

As a long-standing member of RESULTS, I must take issue with the headline, which to the casual reader condemns poverty programs in general. Child care, food and housing assistance keep thousands of families here in New Mexico afloat. They are invaluable. When they are not working correctly, let’s fix them.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a model of gradual reduction of benefits that solves the worst aspects of the problem. Mr. Quigley proposed – and then pronounced dead on arrival – a far-reaching reform that would put all income support under the umbrella of the EITC. Enacting such a reform would result in huge savings in time for recipients and administrative costs for all of us.

If that is out of reach, we can still tweak the current programs. As household income rises, let’s lower the level of support by, say, half of the rise in income. Let’s make sure that the wage earner actually gets a little easier life for her hard work.

ROXANNE ALLEN

Albuquerque

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/2015/02/12/take-steps-correct-income-inequality/23279429/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Take steps to correct income inequality

Jos G. Linn, West Des Moines 12:24 a.m. CST February 12, 2015

I am very encouraged that a number of prominent Republicans, like Paul Ryan, Ted Cruz, and Mitch McConnell, have finally discovered that income inequality is a serious problem. Perhaps their better angels are shining through. I hope these leaders will now take the proven steps to fix the problem.

A good start would be to make the current Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit permanent so families can work full-time and not live in poverty, raise the minimum wage so workers are fairly compensated for the wealth they create, ensure that all children have a brighter future with universal preschool, and let millions of Americans keep their health insurance by fixing Obamacare's shortcomings rather than repealing it. We know these things would make a serious dent in America's wealth gap. But sadly it seems these leaders are more interested in blaming the president for their own dogged refusal to abandon trickle-down economics, which has caused this mess, than solving the problem.

Let's hope their better angels win out. Because if they instead listen to the devil on their shoulder, they'd best remember that he also carries a pitchfork.

— Jos G. Linn, West Des Moines

<http://www.monroemonitor.com/2015/02/17/letter-editor-universal-preschool-needed/>

Monroe Monitor and Valley News (WA): Letter to the Editor | Universal preschool needed

Sabella Johnson got it right: "Invest in early learning because it helps kids and families."
("Sultan Scouts, Children's Alliance take on Olympia," Feb. 10).

Early childhood education prepares students for kindergarten and success throughout life. With programs like Head Start, students are less likely to be a burden on society. So the universal pre-K education is worth the investment.

The question is, will we join young Miss Johnson and use our voices to make sure our representatives know how important this is? We can call, write, tweet, Facebook or meet face-to-face with our elected representatives and request universal pre-K education become an opportunity for all.

- *Willie Dickerson, Snohomish*

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/03/16/hunger-america-can-prevented/24820887/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Hunger in America can be prevented

March 15, 2015

Thanks to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for wanting to protect the SNAP program. [["Vilsack defends food stamp program,"](#) March 3]. While volunteering at my local food bank this year, I saw a man come in who just finished his eight-hour shift at a gas station come for food to get through the month. Vilsack is correct; raising the minimum wage could alleviate some of the need. But until we find and fund these ways to end hunger, cuts to the SNAP program are threats against America's children and elderly.

— Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.

http://www.theolympian.com/2015/03/16/3625100_tax-credit-programs-help-keep.html?rh=1

The Olympian (WA): Tax credit programs help keep people from poverty

March 16, 2015

Your Feb. 20 editorial points out the rising number of people living in poverty in Washington state – half of these are children, elderly or disabled. Your editorial on Feb. 24 reminds us that the number of elderly living in poverty is increasing and will continue to increase as the number of baby boomers turn 65. Poverty is clearly a problem in this country, one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

I heartily support the recommended task force (House Bill 2113) to study anti-poverty strategies in our state. But a task force can only do so much. We already know that the federal programs, Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, are financial life lines that lift millions of people out of poverty. These programs help the working poor – those often working two or three jobs at minimum wage, still making less than \$13,000 annually. These programs were part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (the “fiscal cliff” deal) and are scheduled to expire in 2017.

Some in Congress are already lining up to slash these credits. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 216,000 Washington citizens will fall into or deeper into poverty if Congress fails to make key provisions permanent. Let us stay vigilant in supporting and improving on these established programs that provide tax credits where they are so desperately needed. A tax credit is money in hand.

Helen Henry

Olympia

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20150319/OPINION02/150319078>

Everett Herald (WA): Medicare for all does make sense

Regarding the guest commentary, "[Medicare works; open it to everyone](#)": Another doctor who is retired, and has no ax to grind. Instead, he is giving us his opinion, based on working as a practicing physician and involved in the administration system. I, for one, think his opinion makes sense. Since the U.S. allows the health insurance to tack on 20 percent to the cost of our health care, including bloated executive salaries, no wonder it costs more than outside the U.S. And why should I, dying of cancer, be limited to which doctor I see? What happened to the power of the market? Finally, hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent to lobby Medicare to benefit rich corporations at the expense of ordinary patients. Let's get rid of the complexities intended to make the rich richer and get Medicare available for all of us. Lower medicine costs and better treatment for all of us most in need.

Bob Dickerson

Seattle

<http://www.lenconnect.com/article/20150320/OPINION/150329844/0/SEARCH>

The Daily Telegram (MI): Gerson right about building U.S. society

March 21, 2015

To the editor,

Michael Gerson gives a clear update on the current status of American economic inequality and some ways to turn it around ("[Build society to cut inequality](#)," ow.ly/KB8ql, Lenconnect.com, March 16).

These things that can be done to change this situation will require citizens speaking up about it. First, education: universal preschool to get all children a good start in kindergarten. As a teacher for 35 years, I have seen the difference it makes and the kids without this opportunity who never quite catch up. They are more likely to graduate from high school as well. Then, free community college will lead to decent jobs. Of course, living wages will make all the difference. A person working 40 hours a week too often needs government help or chooses between paying for rent

and food. Which brings up the dangers of cutting the safety net programs like food stamps. Increasing the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits will be helpful immediately.

Our representatives need to know taking action on these programs to turn around economic inequality is important. So give a call, text, or email and speak up to make a difference.

Willie Dickerson

Snohomish, Wash.

<http://www.indystar.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/03/22/cut-food-stamps/25192009/>

Indianapolis Star (IN): Don't cut food stamps

March 22, 2015

I am so frustrated with Congress; they are continually attacking the poor.

The House has released its 2016 budget proposal and it is not good news in regard to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. As with previous House budget proposals, the plan would convert SNAP into a block grant to states (along with Medicaid), and cut it by approximately \$140 billion.

This will serve only one purpose — to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer.

SNAP already provides an average of only \$1.40 per person per meal, primarily to poor children, working-poor parents, seniors, people with disabilities, and others struggling to make ends meet. We live in America and we are forced to starve!

In 2013, SNAP lifted nearly 5 million people out of poverty. Making SNAP a block grant would force states to either reduce benefits or cut people off the program. We cannot let this happen.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

Sharvonne Williams, Indianapolis

<http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/104067/stop-messing-with-snap-tamara-bates-feedback>

Arkansas Business (AR): Stop Messing With SNAP (Tamara Bates Feedback)

Monday, Mar. 23, 2015

TO THE EDITOR:

As an American, I am frustrated that Congress continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The House of Representatives just released its new budget and it would serve one purpose — to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. To help pay for new costly tax cuts, it would convert the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) into a lump sum payment to states. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only 1 percent fraud rate? The simple fact is that if SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are working. Congress should stop trying to screw it up.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

Tamara Bates
Little Rock

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-investing-in-kids-pays-off_69342730

Kitsap Sun (WA): Investing in kids pays off

March 25, 2015

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, WA

Investing in kids pays off

Education is an important way to make a difference. The Legislature is working on this right now, as Chris Henry wrote about recently in the Sun. ("While some education bills move forward, hard work is yet to come," March 16)

Perhaps most effective is the chance to increase funding to early childhood education, giving more children the chance to go to preschool and be ready for kindergarten. As a teacher for over

35 years, I witnessed the difference it can make. Kids that missed this opportunity not only had trouble catching up their whole K-12 career, but were less likely to graduate from high school.

The best way to make sure this happens is to contact your legislators and let them know preschool for all is worth the cost. In the long run it saves the state money by investing early in the lives of our children.

<http://www.snoho.com/html/letters.html>

Snohomish Tribune (WA): Making a difference

Help kids by increasing food stamp funding

To the Editor:

Thanks for the inspiring article about bikers caring for abused kids. ("[Local bikers stand against child abuse - and take kids under their wing](#)," March 18 *Snohomish Tribune*).

The BACA folks show us how to make a difference.

All of us can do something.

For example, right now is budget time in Congress and big decisions on how to spend our taxes are being made. We have it in our power to end child hunger by fully funding the SNAP program (formerly food stamps). By contacting our representatives and telling them it is important to end hunger in the world's richest country, we can do just that.

Take a few minutes to call or email your Representative and Senators. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene is on the Agriculture Committee that funds SNAP and always fights hard for it, but she needs our support. Won't you contribute your voice to end hunger?

Willie Dickerson
Snohomish

<http://www.standard.net/Letters/2015/03/26/Don-t-cut-food-stamps-or-SNAP.html>

Ogden (UT) Standard Examiner: Don't cut food stamps or SNAP

WEDNESDAY , MARCH 25, 2015

Editor,

A few years ago, my 7-year-old neighbor came over late in the afternoon. She casually mentioned that she hadn't eaten anything all day. I asked her why and she replied there wasn't any food. Alarmed, I took her to McDonald's and when she stopped eating her hamburger half

way through I asked if she was full. “No,” she stated, “My mom hasn’t had anything to eat today either.”

One in five children in the U.S. risks going to bed hungry. Many of our Utah representatives in Congress and the Senate believe private charities, not government, should provide for those in need. But right now, private charities, such as our food pantries and Boy Scout food drives only provide 6 percent of emergency food relief. Federal programs, mostly through SNAP (or food stamps) provides the rest. The majority (75 percent) of those receiving food stamps are children, seniors, and the disabled. In 2012, SNAP lifted 5 million Americans out of poverty, including 2.2 million children.

Current budget proposals to cut SNAP funding would leave millions of Americans without food. Please call your congressman and request no more cuts to the vital SNAP program.

Debbie Baskin

Salt Lake City

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865625022/SNAP-for-children.html?pg=all#D8CYAv3FiHPpbKFB.03>

Deseret News (UT): Letter: SNAP for children

Thursday, March 26 2015

A few years ago, living west of Liberty Park, my seven-year-old neighbor came over late in the afternoon. She casually mentioned that she hadn’t eaten anything all day. I asked her why and she replied there wasn’t any food. Alarmed, I took her to McDonald’s and when she stopped eating her hamburger halfway through, I asked if she was full. “No,” she stated, “My mom hasn’t had anything to eat today either.”

One in five children in the U.S. risks going to bed hungry. Many of our Utah representatives in Congress and the Senate believe private charities, not government, should provide for those in need. But right now, private charities, such as our food pantries and Boy Scout food drives, only provide 6 percent of emergency food relief. Federal programs, mostly through SNAP (or food stamps) provides the rest. The majority (75 percent) of those receiving food stamps are children, seniors and the disabled. In 2012, SNAP lifted 5 million Americans out of poverty, including 2.2 million children.

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Debbie Baskin

Salt Lake City

<http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-32615/nkfK7/>

Austin American-Statesman (TX): Food stamp assist works fine as it is

Re: March 21 article, [“States to test ways to send food stamp recipients to work.”](#)

It's great that the U.S. Department of Agriculture wants to help people on its Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program find work. In fact, SNAP's opponents should have been doing this all along.

SNAP lifted nearly 5 million people out of poverty in 2013, mainly because it is designed to respond to changes in the economy. Enrollment goes up when the economy hits a “Great Recession” and goes down when the economy improves, as it is now doing. The proposal to make SNAP a state block grant would eliminate this feature and force states to either reduce benefits or cut people off the program.

As Congress again contemplates cutting SNAP funding, I urge its members, especially my representative, Michael McCaul, to stand up for low-income families and the 21 percent of U.S. children who are at risk of going to bed hungry each night.

MARTHA M. ROGERS, AUSTIN

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-protect-children-from-congressional-cuts_04309872

Kitsap Sun (WA): Protect children from Congressional cuts

March 27, 2015

Diana Tyree-Eddy, Hansville, WA

Protect children from Congressional cuts

Last week, the House and Senate budget committees put forward their budget proposals. Unfortunately, the House proposal includes deep cuts and dramatic changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps).

SNAP is the nation's primary defense against hunger and, at a time when over one in five American children is at risk of going to bed hungry, a critical lifeline for millions. As a local

teacher I daily face having to teach students who are food insecure. House Budget Committee staff estimated the cuts to SNAP total approximately \$125 billion over the next ten years, which the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates could mean 11-12 million Americans would lose access to nutrition benefits. The House budget would convert SNAP into “state flexibility funds,” better-known as block grants, and also require deep cuts in “mandatory” programs (outside of health and retirement programs), which includes SNAP. While the proposal provides no specific details, converting SNAP in to a block grant would be disastrous for millions of children and families.

In particular, the House budget paves the way for deep cuts and changes to SNAP by including SNAP and other programs in the budget reconciliation process, while the Senate does not. This week the full House and Senate will consider their budget proposals, and then they will work to reach a final agreement by April 15. This means we have a short window to stop Congress from putting cuts and changes to SNAP on the “fast track”. Our senators and representatives need to protect vulnerable children and disabled from these harmful cuts.

<http://www.sltrib.com/csp/mediapool/sites/sltrib/pages/printfriendly.csp?id=2335482>

Salt Lake City Tribune (UT): Preserve SNAP to feed millions

MARCH 27, 2015

A few years ago, living just west of Liberty Park, my seven-year-old neighbor came over late in the afternoon. She casually mentioned that she hadn’t eaten anything all day. I asked her why and she replied there wasn’t any food. Alarmed, I took her to McDonald’s, and when she stopped eating her hamburger half way through, I asked if she was full.

“No,” she stated. “My mom hasn’t had anything to eat today, either.”

One in five children in the U.S. risks going to bed hungry. Many of our Utah representatives in Congress believe private charities, not government, should provide for those in need. But right now, private charities, such as our food pantries and Boy Scout food drives, only provide 6 percent of emergency food relief. Federal programs, mostly through SNAP (or food stamps), provides the rest. The majority (75 percent) of those receiving assistance are children, seniors, and the disabled. In 2012, SNAP helped 5 million Americans, including 2.2 million children.

Current budget proposals to cut SNAP funding would leave millions of Americans without food. Please call your Congress member and request no more cuts to the vital SNAP program.

Debbie Baskin

Salt Lake City

<http://www.capitalgazette.com/opinion/letters/ph-ac-ce-letters-20150327-7,0,4287455.story>

Capital Gazette (MD): Food aid

March 27, 2015

As an American, I am frustrated that [Congress](#) continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The [House of Representatives](#) just released its new budget and it would serve one purpose: to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. To help pay for new costly tax cuts, it would convert the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), or SNAP, (formerly food stamps) into a lump sum payment to states. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only 1 percent fraud rate? SNAP is the most effective tool we have to fight hunger, including childhood hunger, and it's working. Congress should stop trying to screw it up.

I urge U.S. Rep. Edwards, U.S. Sen. Mikulski, and U.S. Sen. Cardin to stand up for hungry families in Anne Arundel County and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

MARY BETH MORRISSEY

Severna Park

http://www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/03/congress_letting_down_poor_americans_by_cutting_fo.html

Newark Star-Ledger (NJ): Congress' food stamp cuts neglect poor Americans

By [Letters to the Editor/The Star-Ledger](#)

March 28, 2015 at 8:00 AM

I am frustrated that Congress continues its assault on Americans struggling with poverty. The House of Representatives just released its new budget which will significantly cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps). SNAP lifted nearly 5 million people out of poverty in 2013 and the main reason it did this was because the program is designed to respond to changes in the economy. Enrollment goes up when the economy is bad and goes down when the economy improves. Making SNAP a block grant would eliminate this feature, force states to reduce benefits and cause millions of America's most vulnerable to go hungry.

Lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, veterans and the disabled. Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only one percent fraud rate? The simple fact is that if SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are working. Congress should not mess with such a highly effective program.

Susan Joseph Rack, Martinsville

http://www.theolympian.com/2015/03/30/3648350_programs-for-poorest-are-need.html?rh=1

The Olympian (WA): Programs for poorest are need expanding, not cuts

March 30, 2015

Excellent March 11 letter on breakfast for kids in school: "Breakfast-after-the-bell program makes difference." This is critical for kids whose parents are struggling financially. Also invaluable for these kids and their parents are SNAP (formerly food stamps) and EITC (the Earned Income Tax Credit), the two most effective federal programs serving these families.

I mention this because there are some in our national legislature who would cut these programs in order to continue and expand reduced taxes for our wealthiest citizens. I would like to encourage our representative, Denny Heck, to do whatever he can to make sure there are no cuts to either of these programs.

If it's up to me, I would have them both expanded.

Woody Moore

Shelton

<http://blog.thenewstribune.com/letters/2015/03/30/protection-needed-for-kids-not-corporations/>

Tacoma News Tribune (WA): HUNGER: Protection needed for kids – not corporations

Letter by Donna M. Schindler Munro, Bremerton

March 30, 2015

Re: "D's and R's are partners in posturing" (Robert J. Samuelson column, thenewstribune.com).

I find this column regarding government spending and taxes amazingly short-sighted.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps) is on the congressional chopping block in budget discussions. SNAP is the nation's primary defense against hunger. Child poverty in the U.S, at 21 percent, is the highest of any major country. In Washington state, more than 18 percent of our kids lived below the poverty line in 2013.

Consider these points:

- The Senate budget protects more than \$40 billion in unnecessary and expensive tax breaks and subsidies for oil and gas companies, even as the five biggest oil companies alone made more than \$1 trillion in profits over the last decade.
- In 1952, the corporate income tax accounted for about 32 percent of all federal tax revenue. Today, despite record-breaking profits, corporate taxes bring in just 11 percent. One out of four major profitable corporations pays nothing in federal income taxes. We need tax reform.
- We maintain thousands of nuclear warheads, when a tiny fraction of this number would ensure the deterrence of an attack.

Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and our representatives in the House need to oppose any budget that would cut or restructure SNAP.

Cedar Rapids Gazette (IA): SNAP is working, leave it alone

March 31, 2015

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SNAP is working, leave it alone

As an American, I am frustrated that Congress continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The House of Representatives released its new budget and it would serve one purpose — to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. To help pay for new costly tax cuts, it would convert the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) into a lump-sum payment to states known as block grants. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program. In Iowa 12.1 percent of the population receives SNAP.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only 1 percent fraud rate? If SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are working. Congress should stop trying to screw it up.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP. Call Sen. Joni Ernst at (202) 224-3254 and Rep. Rod Blum at (202) 225-2911.

Judy McDowell
Cedar Rapids

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/04/01/budget-uses-language-patriotic/70758688/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Budget uses language to sound patriotic

Judy Zobel, West Des Moines , Letter to the Editor April 1, 2015

To be ready for the presidential hopefuls coming to Iowa, I've been reading about the fiscal year 2016 budget proposal coming out of the U.S. House of Representatives. There isn't a middle- or lower-class American taxpayer who would not take a beating if this budget is allowed to stand. The killer is that it's presented as a patriotic document.

Let's take the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, for example. The "Balanced Budget for a Stronger America" report states that they would like to "make sure that those who need assistance get more than an invitation into a broken system." They will do this by cutting about \$140 million out of the highly successful SNAP program. Also, they claim they don't want to ignore the fraud in programs such as SNAP. The fraud rate is actually 1 percent, which would lead me to believe this concern is a red herring.

Also stated in the report, in the section concerning the safety net, is the goal of encouraging robust work. Nice goal; however, the average length of time people are on food stamps is eight to 10 months. When there are jobs, people work.

However, my favorite statement is the one about transferring SNAP funding to a "State Flexibility Fund." Programs given to the state in "block grants," which is the proposal in the budget, aren't designed to respond to the ups and downs of the economy as SNAP has in recent years. Eventually the programs get cut, money is used for different purposes or people are forced out.

Does using lovely language really fool the taxpayers? We'll see what happens to the House's "patriotic" budget.

Custer County Chronicle (SD): Like Noem's Work

April 1, 2015

Dear Editor,

I appreciate Rep. Kristi Noem using her voice as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues to send a letter to Congressional leaders urging their support for extending the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding. Our families need the assurance of CHIP funding as they manage family budgets and doctor's appointments. When our children are sick, we all want to know we can take them to the doctor.

Editor and readers, please join me in congratulating Kristi for caring for our children and ask her to also lead the Women's Caucus in extending the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program program and Child Tax Credit for working low-income families. All these issues are important to the families in our community and the current proposed Republican budget puts them at risk.

Shirley Jane Hobbs

Hermosa

http://www.parkrecord.com/opinion/ci_27823669/letters-editor-april-1-3-2015?source=email

Park City Record (UT) Support SNAP to ensure kids don't go hungry

April 1, 2015

Editor:

A few years ago, when I lived just west of Liberty Park in Salt Lake City, my seven-year-old neighbor came over late in the afternoon. She casually mentioned that she hadn't eaten anything all day. I asked her why and she replied there wasn't any food. Alarmed, I took her to McDonald's and when she stopped eating her hamburger halfway through I asked if she was full. "No," she stated, "My mom hasn't had anything to eat today either."

According to www.cbpp.org, one in five children in the U.S. risks going to bed hungry. Many of our Utah representatives in Congress and the Senate believe private charities, not government, should provide for those in need. Currently, private charities, such as our food pantries and Boy Scout food drives only provide 6 percent of emergency food relief. Federal programs, mostly through SNAP (or food stamps) provides the rest. The majority (75 percent) of those receiving assistance are children, seniors, and the disabled. In 2012, SNAP lifted five million Americans out of poverty, including 2.2 million children.

Current budget proposals to cut SNAP funding would leave millions of Americans without food. Please call your congressman and request no more cuts to the vital SNAP program.

Debbie Baskin, RESULTS Group Leader

Park City

New Haven Register (CT): SNAP Cuts Will Hurt Children

April 5, 2015

The House Budget Committee recently passed their version cutting SNAP considerably! It would remove \$140 billion from SNAP (formerly referred to as Food Stamps). I am very upset!

With these cuts, those who take part in SNAP would lose 140 meals yearly. That is 10 weeks of food! As it is, paying for food on the budget allowed for SNAP is already quite difficult.

Now SNAP is our country's largest nutrition program for children, but 21 million would not have them without it; 23 million households would have to go without if their version is agreed to.

If food is taken away, hungry children to not learn. Without enough fresh, nutritious foods, they would not grow well. Furthermore, children and their parents would be more susceptible to illness.

Congress considering cutting rather than investing in these children would be wrong.

Members of Congress pay attention to editorials, articles, and letters to the editor printed in their districts or states. Your printing this letter would encourage Members of Congress to support this and other aspects of the Safety Net.

Leslie Weinberg

Stamford

http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/mailbag/avoid-drastic-damage-to-federal-nutrition-programs/article_b704cd97-db62-5867-b81e-f69b091b17c2.html

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (MO): Avoid drastic damage to federal nutrition programs

April 6, 2015

I am writing in response to the editorial "Senate favors free lunch" (March 31) mentioning the recent House and Senate budget proposals. The piece misrepresented the budget resolution's importance as "not a budget, but a framework" and "nothing in it has the force of law."

Yes, House and Senate budget resolutions passed last week are only frameworks for the detailed budget work to come, but what frameworks they are! They set out an almost identical set of priorities: no new revenues, billions in defense increases, calls for up to \$5 trillion in cuts to critical domestic programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and nutrition support, and turning SNAP and Medicaid into block grants to states. Budget negotiators hope to produce and pass a final budget resolution by April 15.

While both House and Senate budget resolutions share general priorities, they differ in important details. The House resolution specifies at least \$125 billion in cuts to SNAP that could mean 11 million to 12 million Americans would lose access to nutrition benefits. In addition, the House version paves the way for these cuts and changes to SNAP by including SNAP in the budget reconciliation process. The Senate resolution implies significant cuts to SNAP but does not “fast track” SNAP cuts through reconciliation.

Sens. Roy Blunt and Claire McCaskill can urge budget negotiators to follow the Senate approach to avoid the most drastic damage to SNAP and nutrition support.

Vicki K. Carlson • Olivette

<http://www.toledoblade.com/Editorials/2015/04/06/Home-economics-Nutty-and-nasty.html>

Toldeo Blade (OH): Home economics: Nutty and nasty

EDITORIAL – April 6, 2015

(Jos: generated by RESULTS Detroit volunteer Mary Albertson)

The most hopeful thing that can be said about the Republican-led House Budget Committee’s proposed federal budget is that it doesn’t have a snowball’s chance in you-know-where of passing. Its priorities, which include repealing the Affordable Care Act and essentially turning Medicare into a voucher program, are a wish list for the most extreme wing of the Republican Party.

At its worst, this budget plan for next year is nutty and nasty. It ought to be repudiated by any serious Republican presidential candidate.

Nowhere is that truer than in the budget’s plan to cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, by one-third. The food stamp program, which for years enjoyed bipartisan support, will once again become a focal point for congressional wrangling.

Food stamps remain America’s front-line defense against hunger, directly benefitting 1.8 million, or one of six, Ohioans, as well as 44 million other Americans. The House plan would cut SNAP by \$125 billion over the next decade — more than one-third of the program’s funding.

That would likely throw more than 10 million Americans off the program. The House budget would convert food stamps to so-called state flexibility funds, or block grants. With no strings attached to the program, states could cut benefits or enact more-restrictive eligibility requirements, and then use federal dollars for other purposes.

There’s nothing wrong with doing things differently. With Republican support, 10 states — Ohio is not one of them — are using \$200 million in federal grants to test new ways of using work

training programs to get food stamp recipients back to work. Pilot programs include career coaches, training for high-demand jobs, and child care for families who need vocational training.

Better job training can help make the food stamp program work better. But simply cutting benefits won't help people climb the economic ladder.

Current benefits, which average less than \$130 a month, are already inadequate. That's especially so when many recipients don't have access to supermarkets or to healthy, unprocessed food at reasonable costs.

The notion that people remain in poverty to collect \$4 a day in food stamp benefits is ludicrous. Nearly half of SNAP recipients already work.

Children, elderly Americans, and people with disabilities make up most of the rest. One in four eligible Americans doesn't sign up for the program.

The moral claim for these Draconian steps, and others, is balancing the nation's budget in 10 years. But the House Republican plan also includes an increase in defense spending. More than two-thirds of the proposed spending cuts would come from programs that serve poor and middle-class Americans.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush said in Detroit this year that far too many Americans live on the edge of economic ruin. The Republican presidential hopeful says he is working on an economic plan.

The House budget isn't it. Budgets represent fiscal priorities and moral choices, and the latest Republican proposal is irresponsible and immoral.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865625907/Keep-SNAP-funded.html?pg=all#tpQ8TY0BugycfLFC.03>

Deseret News (UT): Keep SNAP funded

Tuesday, April 7 2015

The Great Recession started seven years ago; according to the International Monetary Fund, it has been the worst global recession the world has experienced since World War II. Millions lost their homes, their jobs and their nest eggs in its wake.

So why no Hooverilles, no stories of our fellow citizens surviving on boiled cabbage and roadkill to make it through the Great Recession? Because we collectively learned from the Great Depression and vowed we would never let that happen again. The economy will strengthen and weaken, but our people, especially our children, shouldn't starve.

The House of Representatives recently passed budget proposals including deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, which is the contemporary name for food stamps. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates the cuts could result in 11 to 12 million Americans losing access to nutrition benefits.

In 2013, one in five children in the United States was at risk of going to bed hungry. The U.S. Census reported in that same year that SNAP lifted 4.8 million people out of poverty. Why would we turn our backs on an effective, relevant and necessary program? Please call your congressional representative and tell him or her that we need to preserve funding for this vital program.

Ariane Dansie

Salt Lake City

<http://www.abqjournal.com/565709/opinion/talk-of-the-town-168.html>

Albuquerque Journal (NM): No snap judgments on SNAP program

April 7, 2015

AS CONGRESS WORKS to once again cut Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for low-income families, we can expect to hear the myth of rampant fraud in the program. The truth is that the SNAP program is a model when it comes to achieving its goals and consistently reports have shown only 1 percent fraud throughout the system.

According to the USDA, the fraud that does occur happens more often from retailers inflating their SNAP receipts rather than with the consumer! So next time someone throws up this smokescreen as justification for cutting benefits, please offer to share the true story.

DEE IVY

Albuquerque

<http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/2373352-155/letter-preserve-snap-funding-for-the>

Salt Lake City Tribune (UT): Preserve SNAP funding for the poor

April 7, 2015

The Great Recession started seven years ago, according to the IMF the worst global recession the world has experienced since World War II. Millions lost their homes, their jobs and their nest eggs in its wake.

So why no Hooverilles, no stories of our fellow citizens surviving on boiled cabbage and roadkill to make it through the Great Recession? Because we collectively learned from the Great Depression and vowed that we would never let that happen again. The economy will strengthen and weaken, but our people, especially our children, shouldn't starve.

The House of Representatives recently passed budget proposals including deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, the contemporary name for food stamps). The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates the cuts could result in 11 million to 12 million Americans losing access to nutrition benefits.

SNAP lifted 4.8 million people out of poverty in 2013, according to the U.S. Census. Also in 2013, 1 in 5 children in the United States was at risk of going to bed hungry. Why would we turn our backs on an effective, relevant and necessary program? Congress should preserve funding for this vital program.

Ariane Dansie

Salt Lake City

<http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2015/apr/08/reverse-snap-judgment/>

Spokesman-Review (WA): Reverse SNAP judgment

April 8, 2015

I am frustrated that Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers' party continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The House of Representatives just released its new budget, and it would serve one purpose: to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer.

To help pay for new, costly tax cuts, it would convert the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) into a lump sum payment to states. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

Does McMorris Rodgers forget, or not care, that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly and the disabled? Why does she ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Why does she balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy, and only 1 percent fraud rate?

The simple fact is that if SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our

investments in SNAP are working. McMorris Rodgers needs to tell her congressional teammates the truth about the food program and stop trying to screw it up.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

Debbie Detmer

Spokane

<http://jewishtimes.com/36020/save-snap/>

Baltimore Jewish Times (MD): Save SNAP

April 8, 2015

By Lior Miller, Baltimore

Every afternoon after work, my husband delivers leftover fruit and bagels from his company to homeless individuals who congregate near Health Care for the Homeless in downtown Baltimore. He's earned the affectionate nickname "Bagel Guy." His tzedakah, however much appreciated by these men and women, is a drop in a deep bucket of poverty and hunger in our city ("The Changing Face of Poverty," March 27).

Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes for children and adults, go beyond such tzedakah and represent our conception of tikkun olam, our shared responsibility to heal and transform our world. As both a concerned American citizen and a Jew, I am frustrated that Congress continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The House of Representatives just released its new budget, and it would serve one purpose — to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. To help pay for new costly tax cuts, it would convert SNAP into a lump-sum payment to states. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, the disabled and the homeless? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only 1 percent fraud rate? The simple fact is that if SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are working. These investments are the tikkun olam of public policy.

I urge our members of Congress, including Rep. Elijah Cummings, Rep. Andy Harris, Sen. Barbara Mikulski and Sen. Ben Cardin, to stand up for hungry individuals and families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

Stamford Advocate: <http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Editorial-Congress-avoids-gaze-of-neediest-6190156.php>

Greenwich Time: <http://www.greenwichtime.com/news/article/Editorial-Congress-avoids-gaze-of-neediest-6190156.php>

Connecticut Post: <http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Editorial-Congress-avoids-gaze-of-neediest-6190156.php>

News Times: <http://www.newstimes.com/news/article/Editorial-Congress-avoids-gaze-of-neediest-6190308.php>

Editorial: Congress avoids gaze of neediest

April 10, 2015

The issue: Government support of the neediest Americans is at a fulcrum, as health benefits and sources of nutrition are jeopardized by the budget proposed by the [House of Representatives](#). While the suggested elimination of the Affordable Care Act has grabbed the headlines, this budget also would transform Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps) into block grants, stripping both of millions of dollars. It is a brazen move by the GOP that would dilute services to the poor.

What we wrote: "Congress failed to continue funding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at the same level it had been at for several years.

The net effect is that benefits through SNAP -- the biggest anti-hunger program in the United States -- have been slashed 13.6 percent. That cutback reportedly translates to roughly \$36 a month, or about \$430 a year, for a family of four.

Those dollar amounts may not sound like much for those who think nothing of ordering a \$36 entree or picking up a \$430 dinner tab for four at a nice restaurant. But \$36 a month and \$430 a year is real money for those who can barely put food on the table.

Those cutbacks will affect the lives of about 48 million Americans, some of them your neighbors and friends.

The slashing of benefits to the needy will also hurt the small grocery stores and convenience stores where so many low-income people spend much of their money."

-- Nov. 18, 201

Where it stands: In January of 2014, lawmakers finally settled on a compromise bill that included \$9 billion in cuts to the food stamp program, down from a desired \$40 billion. "Food stamps" has become an outdated and loaded phrase. For millions of people, they simply mean food.

Additionally, this new budget doesn't merely aim to take back so-called Obamacare from eligible citizens; it strips more Americans of health care by depleting Medicare by \$400 million. The exact amount of SNAP cuts now being proposed are elusive, but some estimates put the loss to each person at an average of \$55 per month. If we are dubious of how Congress is willing to spend our taxes, we are also concerned that giving states the power to dole out block grants will fail to meet the intended need. Each state would get a fixed amount, while SNAP expanded and contracted with the national economy. In the hands of the states, the funds also can be diverted to other causes (think of how transportation funding was raided in Connecticut in the not-so-recent past).

What's next: April 15 looms as a targeted date for passage of the final budget resolution.

Members of Connecticut's Congressional Delegation have opposed proposals like these in the past. They need to do so again, and loudly. Our state lawmakers also need to consider the ramifications of these measures as they weigh Gov. [Dannel Malloy](#)'s proposed state budget.

While Malloy responded to past SNAP cuts by boosting heating assistance, his current budget threatens to cripple many social service agencies. We urge lawmakers across the nation to pause and look poverty in the eye. The vast majority of the people who will stare back are children. The rest are seniors. They are disabled. They are veterans. These wide swathes sliced into the safety net would mean punishing landings for Americans who are already in economic free fall.

<http://www.standard.net/Letters/2015/04/11/Keep-SNAP-going.html>

Ogden Standard Examiner (UT): Keep SNAP going

APRIL 10, 2015

Editor,

This is in response to a letter written by Debbie Baskin of Salt Lake City.

I applaud her for speaking out. We have a lot less fortunate citizens who have not been blessed with the opportunity of going to college.

They are working at low-paying jobs, and rely on SNAP program to put food on their table. Do not cut the SNAP program.

Juanita Barnes

Roy

http://www.recordnet.com/article/20150409/OPINION/150409687/101129/A_OPINION

Stockton Recordnet (CA): SNAP a model of efficiency

I am outraged that Congress continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The budget proposal passed by the House of Representatives could make poverty and inequality worse.

To help pay for new costly tax breaks for businesses and wealthy individuals, the House proposal cuts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) by \$125 billion and turns it into a lump sum payment to states. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only 1 percent fraud rate?

The simple fact is that if SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are working — and with one in five American children at risk of hunger, we need to build on SNAP's successes.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

David Dowdy

Modesto

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20150412/OPINION02/150419903>

Everett Herald (WA): Fully fund SNAP to end hunger

April 12, 2015

Thanks for running Dana Milbank's excellent column on the “new round of punitive laws” against the poor. (“[Why must we humiliate those in poverty?](#)”) These laws are just a smokescreen to cause voters to forget the real problem: Hunger in the world's richest country, is already affecting 1 in 6 American adults and 1 in 5 children? We know how to turn this around: Fully fund SNAP (formerly food stamps) to end hunger. Then work on a living wage, since more than 60 percent of recipients work and still qualify for food stamps ([Coalition Against Hunger](#)). The Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit are helping to keep people out of

poverty, why not increase these? Of course none of this will happen unless people raise their voices and ask their representatives to do this. Enough calls and emails will make it good politics to end the tragedy of hunger in America.

Willie Dickerson

Snohomish

http://www.publicopiniononline.com/opinion/ci_27891661/letter-snap-cuts-harmful-still-struggling-region

Chambersburg Public Opinion (PA): SNAP cuts harmful to still-struggling region

Bruce Kessler, Chambersburg

4/13/15

Mike Ross, president of the Franklin County Area Development Corporation, enjoys telling us about local successes in attracting businesses and jobs. This is reflected in the jobless rate dipping below 5 percent. But give the man credit for something more: he tells the truth about our local employment picture.

On April 1, he said this about it: "Typically, they're not family-sustaining jobs. That's a challenge for the region." It's fact of life in today's economy that hard working young people can't sustain a family from wages alone. Big corporations have reduced their labor costs by crushing unions and by relying on temp agencies for much of their workforces. If you think Proctor & Gamble wants to pay "family sustaining" wages here in Franklin County, think again.

"Family-sustaining" is really important, especially to children. For the last 50 years the main help has been food aid. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has grown when parents are laid off during recessions.

Since the 2007 recession, jobs have recovered but wages have stagnated. Right now the median income in Pennsylvania is less than it was before the recession, eight years ago. SNAP participation is decreasing, but remains high.

SNAP is vital to family survival, because Mr. Ross's observation about low wages is true. The problem? Congress just took steps toward huge cuts in SNAP over the next ten years and our U.S. Rep. Bill Shuster voted for it.

Advertisement

A year and a half ago, SNAP benefits were cut 7 percent. Now the House-passed budget calls for \$125 billion in future SNAP cuts. The cuts might mean 11 or 12 million fewer people eligible. They could mean about \$55 less per month per individual, or some combination of the two.

In addition, the House budget instructs the Agriculture Committee to convert SNAP into a block grant for states to administer. House leaders cleverly hope this deflects criticism for "taking food off the table" of hungry Americans onto someone else.

Unlike the House budget, the Senate version does not specifically include SNAP cuts. When both chambers reconcile their differing budgets, we can hope Rep. Shuster will appreciate the harmful impact of huge SNAP cuts on our district and the commonwealth.

He should remember that in his district three-quarters of the households participating in SNAP either have children younger than 18, or seniors older than 60.

When you call his local office (264-8308) or his DC office (202-225-2431), tell him to oppose SNAP cuts in the budget. Otherwise, he might assume that his constituents are okay with plans to increase hunger and poverty.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/04/14/registers-editorial-food-stamp-proposal-hurt-hungry/25801383/>

Des Moines Register Editorial (IA): Food stamp proposal would hurt hungry

The Register's Editorial April 15, 2015

One difference between living in a Third World country and living in the United States: People generally don't starve to death here. This country has a safety net that includes privately funded food banks and publicly funded meals for students and seniors. The poorest Americans have at least something to eat.

They'll have less to eat if some members of Congress have their way.

The recent budget proposal from the U.S. House seeks to make changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that could have devastating consequences. Commonly known as "food stamps," the federally funded program helped 46 million low-income Americans, including 400,000 Iowans, buy food in 2014.

Currently, Americans who meet specific income guidelines are automatically eligible for food stamps. In an economic downturn, the entitlement is there to provide benefits to more people who need them. The Republican proposal would turn the program into a block grant. This means the federal government would give a specified amount of money to each state for food

assistance. When poverty and unemployment increase, federal funding for food stamps may not. States would have to figure out what to do.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the plan would cut SNAP by \$125 billion over 10 years. The Washington, D.C.-based organization estimates changing eligibility guidelines would result in the loss of benefits for 11 to 12 million people each year between 2021 and 2025. Across-the-board benefit cuts would mean a reduction in food assistance of \$55 per person per month. That's \$200 less a month — or about \$2,400 per year — for a family of four.

Right now, an Iowa beneficiary receives about \$3.60 per day in assistance. No one relying on food stamps is eating like a king. Despite what some conservatives want people to believe, this money cannot be used to buy liquor, cigarettes or cruise vacations or to bail someone out of jail. It can only be used to purchase food.

How does reducing this assistance to low-income Americans make the country a better place? How is it morally or religiously justifiable? When the program results in billions of dollars being spent at farmers markets and grocery stores, how is it even a wise economic move for the country?

It isn't. This proposal from House Republicans, like others before it, doesn't make ethical or economic sense. It is simply another attempt to take even more from Americans who already have too little. These politicians have mastered the art of demonizing the poor, portraying them as lazy and sponging off the government. They don't talk about the fact that nearly 70 percent of food stamp beneficiaries are in families with children or more than one-fourth are in households with seniors or disabled people. Many recipients work full-time jobs.

The United States is a wealthy country, and we should be grateful for programs that help low-income people secure food. If politicians want to reduce spending on SNAP, they should dedicate their energies to creating decent-paying jobs. Then fewer people will look to the government for help feeding their families in the first place.

http://www.stardem.com/opinion/editors_inbox/article_3b94d85c-34c6-5ddc-afa9-122355ed6111.html

The Star Democrat (MD): Harris should reject cuts to SNAP

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

As editorials have been pouring in about Congress's budget priorities, I find myself shocked by how out of touch our members of Congress seem to be with our communities. One in 10 Marylanders lives in poverty (<http://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/maryland-2014-report/>). And still, some in Congress continue their assault on our neighbors.

One out of every five kids in this country is at risk of going to bed hungry tonight. Luckily, we have food assistance programs to protect them. One in 10 District 1 households benefits from food stamps (i.e., the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP; http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/ops/Maryland_1.pdf). However, as Congress finalizes their budget, many plan to take food away from those who need it. The House has proposed to pay for costly tax breaks for businesses and the wealthy by cutting SNAP by \$125 billion. This would force 12 to 13 million hungry Americans off the program. How would Congressman Harris feel if these were his children?

How can Rep. Harris forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly and the disabled (over 84 percent in District 1)? How can he ignore that SNAP improves nutrition and health outcomes in children? When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments are working. After all, every dollar in new SNAP benefits results in \$1.80 in total economic activity.

We need to move forward as a country — not backward. Supporting inequality is not what Maryland and the USA is about. Our state and our country only thrive when all of us can at least survive.

I urge Rep. Andy Harris to stand up for his hungry constituents and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

SARA BUCKINGHAM,

Baltimore

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2015/04/15/1-food-stamp-cuts-would-hurt-the-needy.html>

Columbus Post-Dispatch (OH): Food-stamp cuts would hurt the needy

One item Congress will consider this week is eliminating the estate tax. This tax affects individuals with estates worth more than \$5.43 million (or \$10.86 million for married couples), which represent 0.2 percent of the population, or about 64,000 people.

Eliminating this tax will reduce government revenues by \$268 billion over 10 years, increasing our country's deficit.

At the same time Congress will consider cutting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps) by \$125 billion in the next 10 years, converting SNAP into a block grant to states, and using budget reconciliation to fast-track these cuts into law in 2015. These cuts

could lead to 11 million to 12 million children and adults losing benefits. The U.S. Census reports that SNAP lifted 4.8 million people out of poverty in 2013.

In Ohio, SNAP provided about \$2.9 billion in food benefits to more than 1.8 million people monthly, with 70 percent of those beneficiaries being children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, including veterans. It would appear that once again Congress is trying to balance the budget on the backs of our country's most vulnerable.

I have already called my U.S. representative, Pat Tiberi, and Ohio Sens. Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown to insist they stand up for hungry children and families by opposing any budget that makes cuts or structural changes to SNAP. I urge all to do the same.

SUSAN NEUMANN-MARTIENSEN

Columbus

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20150416/LETTERS/504161007/1129/opinion02?Title=Thursday-s-letters-A-successful-program>

Spartanburg Herald-Journal (SC): A successful program

Thursday, April 16, 2015

I would like to comment on the article published on www.GoUpstate.com on April 1 titled "South Carolina food stamp fraud unit nets 1st convictions." There is information about SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly food stamps) that readers should be aware of.

Although this article focused on people taking advantage of this federal program, data show that if SNAP were a corporate program, it would be lauded for its effectiveness with a 96 percent accuracy rate and only 1 percent fraud rate.

Because of low wages and the ongoing impact of the Great Recession, millions of Americans are struggling to put food on the table. In 2013, more than one in five children in the U.S. were at risk of going to bed hungry every night (21 percent).

Studies show that children who are regularly hungry suffer from weakened immune systems, slowed and abnormal growth, and anemia. Children in families that do not struggle against hunger tend to be healthier, while young children from food-insecure households are two-thirds more likely to be at risk of developmental problems than those from households with enough to eat.

Instead of protecting such a successful program, Congress is trying to gut it. The House has proposed deep cuts and structural changes to SNAP, which could lead to 11 million to 12 million children and adults losing benefits (www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=5287).

I would like Congressman Trey Gowdy to oppose these deep cuts on SNAP, and oppose any budget that makes cuts or structural changes to SNAP. I request that Congress help the most vulnerable in our society. Do not let America's children go to bed hungry.

Mr. Gowdy, you have told your constituents that you care about children, that their education and well-being are important to the entire society. Please stand up for our hungry children.

Begoña Caballero-Garcia

Greenville

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865626548/No-more-hungry-kids.html?pg=all#yUxX5vvsyyi0KbRy.03>

Deseret News (UT): No More Hungry Kids

April 16, 2015

There was an excellent reminder of the importance of the SNAP program, or food stamps, by Ariane Dansie ("Keep SNAP funded," April 7). One in five hungry children is too many. Connecting with our representatives about this tragedy of hunger in the world's richest country can help turn it around. Please take five minutes for a call or email asking your representative and senators to fully fund the SNAP program.

Willie Dickerson

Snohomish, Washington

http://www.lcsun-news.com/las_cruces-opinion/ci_27919583/letters-april-16

Las Cruces Sun-News (NM): Food stamps program is once again under attack

Once again, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, is under attack. SNAP is the first line of defense against hunger for many of us at some point in our lives. People struggling with jobs that only offer part-time hours or low wages need SNAP to feed their families. Seniors, the disabled and others on limited incomes need SNAP to eat.

In New Mexico, more than 74 percent of SNAP participants are in households with children, and almost 24 percent include elderly or disabled household members. About half are working families. In New Mexico's Second Congressional District, 44,722 households rely on SNAP.

In March, the U.S. House and Senate passed their 2016 budget resolutions. The House proposal would cut SNAP by approximately \$125 billion over the next 10 years. Under the House proposal, up to 12 million Americans could lose access to SNAP and many more could see benefits cut. This week, Congress members will be working on a final budget agreement, including whether to include SNAP in the budget reconciliation process. Using this process could allow major changes to the safety net to be made without the protections of the normal legislative process.

While those in favor of cuts to SNAP claim the program is full of fraud and abuse, the fact is the fraud rate is only 1 percent. According to the USDA, most fraud is committed by retailers who inflate their SNAP receipts, not by people receiving benefits.

Your voice is needed. If you or anyone you know has ever had to rely on SNAP, or if you would like to know SNAP will be there for those who need it in the future, please call Rep. Steve Pearce at (855) 473-2723 and ask him to keep changes to SNAP out of the budget reconciliation process.

Eva Nevarez St. John, Las Cruces

http://www.scsun-news.com/silver_city-opinion/ci_27919586

Silver City Sun-News (NM): Food stamps program is once again under attack

Once again, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps, is under attack. SNAP is the first line of defense against hunger for many of us at some point in our lives. People struggling with jobs that only offer part-time hours or low wages need SNAP to feed their families. Seniors, the disabled and others on limited incomes need SNAP to eat.

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could allow major changes to the safety net to be made without the protections of the normal legislative process.

While those in favor of cuts to SNAP claim the program is full of fraud and abuse, the fact is the fraud rate is only 1 percent. According to the USDA, most fraud is committed by retailers who inflate their SNAP receipts, not by people receiving benefits.

Your voice is needed. If you or anyone you know has ever had to rely on SNAP, or if you would like to know SNAP will be there for those who need it in the future, please call Rep. Steve Pearce at (855) 473-2723 and ask him to keep changes to SNAP out of the budget reconciliation process.

Eva Nevarez St. John, Las Cruces

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-ask-congress-to-retain-nutrition-programs_14508401

Kitsap Sun (WA): Ask Congress to retain nutrition programs

April 17, 2015

James Franklin, Bremerton

Ask Congress to retain nutrition programs

Recent proposals for changes to the federal budget include decreases in the funding for food and nutrition programs, known as SNAP. Additionally, there is a proposal to convert SNAP funding to a block grant, which would restrict states' ability to respond to changes in the economy or food prices.

SNAP provides supplemental nutrition to the most vulnerable among us, namely, senior citizens living on a fixed income, children, and the unemployed. It is one of the best deals we can get for our tax dollar. Not only does adequate nutrition in early life reduce the costs of medical care later, every \$1 spent on nutrition results in \$1.70 in economic activity.

In addition, the fraud rate for SNAP is about 1 percent, the administrative costs for SNAP are about 5 percent, and at current funding levels, the program does not contribute to budgetary pressures (see Center on Budget and Policy Priorities "Policy Basics: Introduction to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program").

The drought in California may last for many years, decreasing, in the near and intermediate term, the bounty that California agriculture has provided for generations. This will likely increase the prices of the foods most important to young children and expectant women.

Please urge your legislators to vote against these changes in the present law. Help to preserve this efficient, responsive program which provides the necessary nutrition for our most vulnerable citizens.

MASON COUNTY JOURNAL

Mason County Journal - Thursday, April 16, 2015

Children are too small to abandon

Editor, the *Journal*

I thank the *Mason County Journal* for your attention to the health and well-being of our community. I would like to draw attention to a disheartening threat to the well-being of the most vulnerable among us, including children and the elderly and

especially those who live in families of limited income.

The threat is the severely reduced budget proposals for the most important programs serving these people. I am most especially concerned about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). This program faces unconscionable reductions in the budgets proposed by both houses of congress.

We've all watched our money being used to protect businesses "too big to fail." I

would like to see a similarly urgent response to protecting children against the threat of hunger and poverty. They are too small to abandon.

I would also like to point out that all of the money flowing into these programs flows into our local economy. I would like to see increases in SNAP to better serve this population and our local economy.

Woody Moore
Shelton

<http://www.thisweeknews.com/content/stories/Letters/2015/04/16/ohios-leaders-must-protect-program-that-feeds-the-hungry.html>

This Week Community News (OH): Ohio's leaders must protect program that feeds the hungry

April 16, 2015

As a child recipient of benefits from federally funded hunger programs and local food banks, I am horrified that Congress continues to put forth budgets that cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) by \$125 billion.

This move would force millions of hungry Americans out of the program -- Americans like my mother, who worked multiple jobs with small children at home to put herself through school to become a teacher, or children, like I was, who have no control over their parents' circumstances. SNAP has proven to improve nutrition and health outcomes for children and has a 96 percent accuracy and 1 percent fraud rate.

While one in five children is at risk for hunger, and as our community rallies around the Mid-Ohio Foodbank to bring hunger relief to families, seniors and children, our elected officials are not representing the interests of our community. Sens. Rob Portman and Sherrod Brown, along with our representatives in the House, must stand against this tyranny and ensure nutrition programs are fully funded. Congress can't take this money and use it for costly tax breaks for businesses and wealthy individuals.

With the help of programs like SNAP, I was able to grow up to graduate from college and have a successful career. I don't need SNAP for my children, but without the program, other children will not have the opportunities. We can and must do better for all children.

Tiffany Grinstead

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/Letters-St-Camillus-workers-deserve-raise-6205273.php>

Stamford Advocate (CT): For the children

To the editors,

Thank you for your editorial "Congress avoids gaze of neediest" (April 10). The cuts in the House Budget Proposal would eliminate benefits for 11-12 million Americans, half of them children. And changing SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to a block grant

simply hobbles a program that works, and works well -- a highly efficient program with one of the lowest fraud rates of any government program: less than 1 percent. SNAP was designed to grow when times are bad, as in the past seven years, and to shrink again as employment picks up, something that has begun this year.

Connecticut's members of Congress have fought hard to maintain the social safety net. But it's hard to soldier on alone. They deserve to know they have our support. Looking up the phone numbers of their local offices and calling to urge them on would be five minutes well spent. Do it for the children.

Bill Baker

Connecticut Results volunteer

Stamford

http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/editorials/our-view-protect-federal-food-assistance/article_6f7bd908-ee59-5691-9b8c-87f1c6f40703.html

Santa Fe New Mexican (NM) Editorial: Protect federal food assistance

April 17, 2015

As congressional budget negotiators sit down to figure out how many billions of dollars will be spent over the coming fiscal year, it's easy to get caught up in talk of winning and losing and forget that cuts make a difference in the lives of real people.

That's particularly true when discussing programs that help people in poverty, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — SNAP — or what used to be known as food stamps.

With Republicans in the majority in both the House and Senate, it's no secret that cuts in programs that help people are always on the table.

How much of the proposed cuts will make it into the final budget, of course, is anyone's guess, since President Barack Obama holds the veto pen.

Even so, it's smart for advocates of helping the hungry to pay close attention as budget discussions continue. As many as 11 million Americans could be cut from SNAP over the next decade, under some estimates.

In New Mexico, the stakes are particularly high. Last year, some 431,000 New Mexico residents, or 21 percent of the state population (1 in 5), used food stamps.

They are among the 46 million people in the United States who rely on assistance to avoid hunger. It's hardly a princely sum, either. Recipients get \$29 a week.

Actor Gwyneth Paltrow is currently the subject of much online ridicule for her purchases on the so-called food stamp diet challenge; evidently a bag of black beans and fresh vegetables appear self-indulgent.

Balancing the budgets on the backs of poor people is a bad idea — and ineffective as well, as the United States doesn't spend enough on poverty programs to make a dent in budget overspending.

New Mexicans should make sure to let their representatives in Congress know they want our federal budget to truly show the country's priorities. Put people first.

For those who aren't particularly compassionate, there's this to remember, too: Every dollar spent through SNAP benefits produces \$1.73 in economic activity. Making sure people have money to buy the food they need also stimulates the economy.

That's a win for food-stamp recipients, store owners and taxpayers in general.

Let's not cut what works.

http://www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/04/christie_town_hall_meetings_should_include_all_jer.html

Newark Star-Ledger (NJ): Calling for Congress to stand up for SNAP

As I reflect on how my tax dollars are being used, I am outraged that some in Congress continue their attacks on our neighbors struggling with poverty. To help pay for new tax breaks for businesses and wealthy individuals, the House proposed to cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps) by \$125 billion. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program, taking food from mouths of children.

Our lawmakers should be ashamed if they forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, veterans and the disabled. SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children. Our investments in SNAP are helping millions put food on the table -- and with one in five American children at risk of hunger, we need to build on SNAP's successes, not destroy them by slashing benefits and block granting the program.

Rep. Leonard Lance, my representative in Congress, should have the courage to tell his high-income donors that we should all stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP. I am proud that my taxes provide nutrition assistance to the hungry.

Kitsap Sun (WA): Ask Congress to retain nutrition programs

James Franklin, Bremerton

April 17, 2015

Recent proposals for changes to the federal budget include decreases in the funding for food and nutrition programs, known as SNAP. Additionally, there is a proposal to convert SNAP funding to a block grant, which would restrict states' ability to respond to changes in the economy or food prices.

SNAP provides supplemental nutrition to the most vulnerable among us, namely, senior citizens living on a fixed income, children, and the unemployed. It is one of the best deals we can get for our tax dollar. Not only does adequate nutrition in early life reduce the costs of medical care later, every \$1 spent on nutrition results in \$1.70 in economic activity.

In addition, the fraud rate for SNAP is about 1 percent, the administrative costs for SNAP are about 5 percent, and at current funding levels, the program does not contribute to budgetary pressures (see Center on Budget and Policy Priorities "Policy Basics: Introduction to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program").

The drought in California may last for many years, decreasing, in the near and intermediate term, the bounty that California agriculture has provided for generations. This will likely increase the prices of the foods most important to young children and expectant women.

Please urge your legislators to vote against these changes in the present law. Help to preserve this efficient, responsive program which provides the necessary nutrition for our most vulnerable citizens.

<http://www.citizen-times.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/04/17/tales-two-dollar-challenge/25943395/>

Asheville Citizen-Times (NC): Tales of the Two Dollar Challenge

Ken Patterson, OPINION

April 18, 2015

On April 6-10 I took the Two Dollar Challenge, a simulation designed by a brilliant professor at the University of Mary Washington. The purpose of the simulation is to help participants bridge what author Nicholas Kristof calls "the empathy gap," and to have us think about the relationship

between “service” and “the served.” So, I went to Hopey and Company on Saturday, April 4, bought \$10 worth of food, and rationed it for the week.

The experience was enlightening. In purchasing my food, price was critical. I had to point out to the checkout clerk that my bananas and yams were \$.49 per pound, not \$.99, to make my \$10 limit. I could have purchased cheaper coffee, but the eight-ounce package was too much, so I had to buy a couple of ounces more expensive beans at \$9.99/pound. I ended up spending \$1.80 of my \$10 on coffee. Some might call this a bad decision, I thought, but only I knew what it would take for me to function during the week.

I spend a lot time thinking about food — what would I eat next? Would my food last? What would I really want to eat if I had a choice? I noticed that my cheap food had a lot of sodium and fewer calories. And though my food lasted, by the end of the week I was definitely thinner. It was clear that a regular diet of what I ate would deplete me within a few weeks.

I also had some interesting insights. I was shorter tempered on at least one of the days because I felt hungry, and it was harder to focus on my work. I felt kind of isolated in my \$10 world — like life was happening around me, and nobody was aware of what I was experiencing. And I wanted the week to be over so I could leave the restrictions and isolation.

Then I tried to imagine what it must be like to have limited resources, not just for food, but also for rent, transportation, utilities, education, health care, clothes, and other living expense. And heaven forbid I would have a medical emergency or other unforeseen expense. I concluded that living on severely limited resources must be extremely taxing and stressful. I also realized that I would probably never understand what it’s like to live that life because I have the resources that allow me to make choices.

The experience helped me see that it’s pretty easy to be out of touch with the challenging lives that many people lead daily, 365 days per year. Anyone struggling to meet their basic needs definitely sees the world differently, which causes them to make choices that we with resources may never understand. Solutions that seem natural to those of us with the latitude to make choices just aren’t there for them. Ultimately, there is a huge gap in understanding between those with resources and those living on the edge.

Our policy makers could learn from an experience like the Two Dollar Challenge. They might find it a whole lot harder to cut billions of dollars from our Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as our current Congress has. They might be more forthcoming in directing our foreign policy resources toward helping mothers and babies survive, and kids get proper nutrition and schooling. I hope we can count on Sens. Burr and Tillis, and Reps. Meadows and McHenry to fend off cuts to our SNAP program, and to support forthcoming maternal and child survival legislation. It would demonstrate their understanding of the empathy gap.

Ken Patterson is director of global grassroots advocacy for RESULTS.

http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letters-to-the-editor-april/article_59789bcb-3135-5fce-80b9-ed16fbefc62a.html

Santa Fe New Mexican (NM): Budget will hurt people who depend on food stamps

April 19, 2015

Negotiations are continuing on the 2015 budget resolution in Congress. It's a bad budget for SNAP (food stamps). It could mean an estimated \$125 billion in cuts to SNAP over the next 10 years, reducing monthly benefits by \$55 per person (currently \$121 and \$1.34 per meal for New Mexicans). In addition, harmful changes to how SNAP is administered are proposed for this highly effective program. It has lifted 4.8 million people out of poverty in 2013 and has a record for accuracy (96 percent) and fraud (1 percent) that any corporation would envy.

One in five people living in our state rely on SNAP to get enough food. In the 3rd Congressional District, more than 35,000 households receive SNAP benefits. These aren't just numbers. These are the children, families, elderly and disabled whose health and well-being will be hit hard by SNAP cuts.

Tell U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján, Sen. Tom Udall and Sen. Martin Heinrich to speak out and vote no.

Lydia Pendley

co-group leader

RESULTS-Santa Fe

http://www.contracostatimes.com/letters/ci_27935128/april-20-letters-editor

Contra Costa Times (CA): Political involvement will help end poverty

April 20, 2015

Haley Hickman's letter, "There are starving children among us," spoke of helping starving children living in our own neighborhoods. He suggested, "Donate food to our local food banks, donate your time, donate something."

I strongly agree and would like to offer this suggestion to those who want to maximize their effectiveness: Learn about and join RESULTS.

RESULTS is a grass roots, citizens' advocacy organization that has helped shift billions of federal taxpayer dollars to programs that are effectively helping people gain their economic independence and lift themselves out of poverty. The programs are helping people in every U.S. neighborhood and around the world.

While poverty is an economic condition, its solutions are political, not economic. Consequently, implementing those solutions requires political involvement, not economic charity.

RESULTS teaches volunteers how to use their own political power to build support among conservatives and liberals in Congress for successful anti-poverty programs.

To learn more, visit RESULTS.org. There are several chapters throughout the Bay Area.

Jim Driggers

Concord

Driggers is the leader of the Contra Costa chapter of RESULTS.

<http://www.abqjournal.com/572618/opinion/wide.html>

Albuquerque Journal (NM): No cuts for food stamps

April 21, 2015

AS A RETIRED teacher – 32 years in the public schools – I know that hungry students cannot learn as well.

One American child in five is at risk of going to bed hungry every night. Congress plans to cut the SNAP program – food stamps – by \$125 billion. I want my government to protect children and the elderly of America, not harm them.

We are the wealthiest nation in the world, but statistics show that this wealth is concentrated in the top 1 percent of the population. In January 2014, the median income of the U.S. Congress was \$1,008,767, according to the Center for Responsible Politics. The rich don't need the protection of the government as much as our children and elderly do.

JUDITH BEERY

Santa Fe

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/04/23/congress-considers-snap-cuts-eliminating-estate-taxes/26216693/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Congress considers SNAP cuts, eliminating estate taxes

Jos G. Linn, West Des Moines, April 23, 2015

Thank you to the Register for printing its excellent editorial about proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [\["Food stamp proposal would hurt hungry"\]](#) April 15. How ironic that in the same week you criticize Congress for these cuts, the House is voting for a complete repeal of the federal estate tax. Talk about misguided priorities.

I guess for the House increasing hunger in America is OK as long as the super-wealthy reap the benefits. The estate tax literally affects only multimillionaires, couples with more than \$10 million in assets to be exact. Proponents of repeal, which include most of Iowa's congressional delegation and the Farm Bureau, falsely claim the estate tax places an undue burden on family farms and small business. [The facts are](#) that in 2013, *only 20 estates in the entire country* owed any estate tax and their tax amounted to about 5 percent. Some burden indeed.

Budgets are about priorities. And this House's priority is to force 11-12 million low-income children and adults deeper into poverty to help finance a \$3 million tax cut each for the richest 0.2 percent of estates. To use the Register's own words, how is this morally or religiously justifiable? The answer — it's not.

<http://www.citizen-times.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/04/23/letter-fully-fund-snap-program-combat-tragedy-hunger/26247003/>

Asheville Citizen-Times (NC): Fully fund SNAP program to combat tragedy of hunger

April 24, 2015

Kudos to Ken Patterson for finding out what it is like to live on a \$2 a day budget (“Tales of the Two Dollar Challenge” by Ken Patterson, Citizen-Times, April 19). Results: cranky, hungry, worried, poorly nourished, and a definite empathy for those who spend their lives this way. With 16 million children currently on food stamps, how can any member of Congress consider cutting this program? Instead, let’s ask them to fully fund the SNAP program (food stamps) and rectify the underlying causes that continue this tragedy of hunger in America.

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, WA

http://m.dailyinterlake.com/members/fight-devastating-effect-of-snap-cuts/article_7a0becc2-eb03-11e4-b4e6-071d6340f367.html?mode=jqm

Daily Interlake (NT): Fight devastating effect of SNAP cuts

April 26, 2015

Both the U.S. House and Senate have now passed their 2016 budget resolutions. Resolutions are not laws, but do provide an outline or framework within which the respective congressional chambers are to proceed with bills that become laws of the land. Sadly, both resolutions make deep cuts to anti-poverty programs, the House ruthlessly targeting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), even putting cuts to SNAP on a “fast track.”

Such cuts could lead to 11 million to 12 million children and adults including the elderly, disabled, active service personnel, veterans, and the working poor, losing benefits. The House plan would do this by cutting SNAP by \$125 billion over the next 10 years, while converting SNAP into lump sum block grants to states, rendering it inflexible regardless of rises and falls in America’s economy.

SNAP is an efficient, effective program. Tell Congress not to fix what isn’t broken.

Make no mistake. The House plan could leave many vulnerable Americans at risk for hunger to a degree not seen since the Great Depression. Please contact Sens. Jon Tester (202-224-2644) and Steve Daines (202-224-2651) and Rep. Ryan Zinke (202-225-3211). Urge them to oppose any cuts to SNAP.

—Karen Cunningham, Coram

http://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/letter-tell-congress-not-to-cut-food-stamp-benefits/article_91b74b2e-9ae3-515b-b57f-7879084478b5.html

Eagle-Tribune (MA): Tell Congress not to cut food stamp benefits

Monday, April 27, 2015

To the editor:

I am outraged that some in Congress continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. Congress returns to Washington and will finalize its budget blueprint -- and this could make poverty and inequality worse. To help pay for new costly tax breaks for businesses and wealthy individuals, the House proposal cuts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) by \$125 billion. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are helping millions of families put food on the table -- and with one in five American children at risk of hunger, we need to build on SNAP's successes.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP.

Bill Deignan

Tewksbury

<http://www.chron.com/opinion/editorials/article/Snap-woes-6222849.php>

Houston Chronicle Editorial (TX): Snap woes

Cutting the federal food assistance program mainly hurts children

April 27, 2015

Representatives from the [Houston Food Bank](#) are sounding the alarm: [U.S. House](#) and Senate budget proposals include deep cuts and changes to the federal food-assistance program, SNAP.

When someone loses a job or gets ill and a family's circumstances deteriorate, SNAP, commonly known as "food stamps," is the first line of defense against hunger.

Over one-half of SNAP funding goes to working families. Last year, SNAP reached almost 4 million Texas residents, or 14 percent of the population, according to the [Center for Budget Policy](#) and Priorities.

Critics of SNAP argue that recipients should just work harder and longer hours. But the majority of people who receive SNAP benefits are children, the disabled and the elderly.

A family can't afford a staple of luxuries on SNAP. The program on average provides in Texas about \$1.26 per meal, or \$3.78 a day.

The program is not intended to be permanent. The average length of time a family stays on SNAP in Texas is 19 1/2 months, which seems a reasonable amount of time for a family to get on its feet again.

The Houston Food Bank and other nonprofit organizations dedicated to ending hunger play a valuable role in our community.

The Food Bank served 59 million nutritious meals to area families last year. But the leadership at the Food Bank made it clear in a recent meeting with the [Houston Chronicle](#) editorial board that voluntary efforts at the current scale would not be sufficient to offset cuts in billions of dollars of federal appropriations.

In particular, the Food Bank would not be able to keep up with the demand for fresh produce. Lack of access to fresh produce by our state's poorest families would exacerbate our state's spiraling obesity rates.

If funding for SNAP is sheared, it's not just that more children will go to bed hungry. Hunger carries with it long-term consequences. Studies show that children who are regularly hungry suffer from weakened immune systems, slowed and abnormal growth and anemia, according to RESULTS, a nonprofit group dedicated to ending poverty. More pregnant mothers will give birth to children with developmental delays.

Most Americans understand that it's time for the federal government to begin living within its means. But politicians should first focus their attention on more job training for SNAP recipients and on how to reduce overall poverty. A drastic cut in the budget for SNAP would be a big mistake with generational consequences.

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20150428/ARTICLES/150429744/1051/news?p=2&tc=pg>

Spartanburg Herald-Journal (SC): We have a moral obligation to feed the hungry

By LINDA POWERS BILANCHONE
For the Herald-Journal

Tuesday, April 28, 2015

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's most important anti-hunger program. In fiscal year 2014, this program reached 835,000 South Carolinians — mostly children and elderly or disabled people.

In some ways, we taxpayers are lucky — we can fulfill our moral obligation to feed the hungry with almost no effort. Our government, on our behalf, identifies the needy and offers them a helping hand. It is reassuring to know that help is available and we are part of providing that help. That doesn't mean, however, that we don't need to remain vigilant regarding the program that is administered on our behalf.

Currently, Congress is wrestling with balancing the budget, and some members of Congress are considering deep cuts to SNAP in order to achieve a balanced budget. It is up to us to let our representatives know that we don't want Congress to cut this important program.

We want our representatives to know that we take the notion of feeding the hungry seriously. Each of us has experienced hunger at some time, if only for a few hours; we know how debilitating it can be.

Two organizations that are active locally (and probably others, too) endorse the notion that our government should support programs and policies to reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families. They are the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization that promotes informed voting and participation in government, and RESULTS, a citizens' lobby dedicated to stopping hunger and poverty domestically and globally.

Both of these organizations offer information that we can use to make a decision about whether to get involved in this issue.

We know that in South Carolina in fiscal year 2013, 89 percent of households receiving SNAP had income below the poverty line — about \$23,850 for a family of four in 2014. And 51 percent of households were in deep poverty with yearly income below 50 percent of the poverty line. SNAP addresses the needs of these families.

SNAP targets benefits according to need. Very poor households receive more SNAP benefits than households that are closer to the poverty line. Households receive SNAP benefits on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards, which can be used only to purchase food at one of the 252,900 authorized retail locations around the country, including 5,200 in South Carolina.

The average monthly SNAP benefit for each household member in 2013-2014 was \$123.

While I'm guessing that most of us who support this program do so because we feel a moral obligation to help see that the hungry are fed, there are also benefits to our economy from SNAP. Moody's Analytics estimates that SNAP benefits pumped about \$1.2 billion into South Carolina's economy in 2014.

SNAP recipients spend their dollars at the grocery store; the grocery store buys more products to sell and employs more people to stock that product; food production companies produce more food and hire more employees to deliver it; and the economy grows!

And when the economy grows, we all benefit.

If you believe we have a moral obligation to feed the hungry, consider calling Congressman Trey Gowdy's office at 583-3264 to ask him to ask members of the House Agriculture Committee to stand strong for SNAP and oppose any cuts to the SNAP program in the budget negotiations. We ask this because cuts to SNAP will hurt our state's most vulnerable families.

We do not want to be a part of forcing poor families deeper into poverty. We do not want to compromise the health and well-being of South Carolina's families by once again cutting SNAP. You can be a part of convincing Congress to protect these hungry families by rejecting cuts to SNAP. Many people who depend on the program will thank you.

Linda Powers Bilanchone is president-elect of the League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County.

<http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/04/28/april-frustrated-lack-police-response/26514037/>

The Californian (CA): Congress has wrong budget priorities

April 29, 2015

Editor's note: The Salinas Californian received two nearly identical letters from the women whose names are given below.

We are infuriated that some in Congress continue their assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. Congress returns to DC and will finalize their budget blueprint — and this could make poverty and inequality worse. To help pay for new costly tax breaks for businesses and wealthy individuals, the House proposal cuts the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) by \$125 billion. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program.

We urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP. The American motto that if you work hard enough, you'll be able to pull yourself out of poverty to better your circumstances belittles these communities efforts and reinforces the hesitancy to support these programs.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are helping millions of families put food on the table — and with one in five American children at risk of hunger, we need to build on SNAP's successes.

SNAP is important and it needs to be continually supported.

Jenn Figueroa and Ashley Perez

University of California, Santa Cruz

<http://www.custercountynews.com/cms/news/story-715780.html>

Custer County Chronicle (SD): SNAP use declines in county, state

Jason Ferguson

Thursday, April 30th, 2015

Around 235 homes in Custer County received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Custer County in February of this year, with those benefits supporting 506 people within those households. Those numbers are on par with 2014, when an average of 236 households in the county received SNAP benefits to support an average of 515 people, and well down from 2013, when an average of 257 homes received benefits to support an average of 568 people.

Unlike many parts of the country, SNAP benefits don't appear to be on the rise in Custer County, although that doesn't prevent many both in the county and nation to declare war on those who receive SNAP, also known as food stamps, with many believing they are professional system abusers, lazy bottom feeders—and sometimes drug users—who are able-bodied enough to work, but simply don't want to.

The stories of abuse are there. People who use SNAP to buy junk food, energy drinks or luxury foods. People who use SNAP and then drive away in a brand new car. People who use SNAP but are covered in expensive tattoos. People who trade SNAP for cash or drugs.

“I have seen people purchasing filet mignons and crab legs with their EBT cards,” Missouri State Rep. Rick Brattin (jlpp.org) said. “When I can't afford it on my pay, I don't want people on the taxpayer's dime to afford those kinds of foods either.”

These types of incidents are the exception and not the rule, says Jos Linn, grassroots manager, U.S. Poverty Campaigns for RESULTS/RESULTS Educational fund, a national grassroots organization working to create the political will to end poverty. For many, SNAP benefits are a safety net when they are down on their luck through a loss of job, divorce or other issues out of their control.

Linn points out that both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate have passed their respective budget resolutions, both of which she said are not good for Americans living in poverty.

“The House bill is much worse than the Senate's,” she said.

Linn said the House bill would cut \$125 billion from SNAP over the next 10 years, convert SNAP into a block grant for states (“which is a very bad idea,” she said), and then use the “budget reconciliation” to fast track the cuts. The House and Senate are still working to hammer out an agreement, but Linn said RESULTS would like to see all references to cutting or restructuring SNAP out of any final budget resolution.

“But if the cuts are kept in, then we at least want those cuts or changes not to be subject to reconciliation (reconciliation bills cannot be filibustered in the Senate), thus making them harder to pass,” Linn said.

Statewide, SNAP use has been on the decline, just as it has in Custer County. In fiscal year 2012, South Dakota saw \$165.6 million in SNAP funding distributed (all SNAP benefits are 100 percent federally funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture), while \$153.5 million was distributed in fiscal year 2014.

Tia Kafka, communications director for the South Dakota Department of Social Services, said the decrease in SNAP benefits distributed can be attributed to the state and country's recovering economy.

"SNAP use typically follows economic trends," she said.

SNAP benefits are based on a federal formula. Eligible households are issued a monthly allotment of SNAP benefits based on the federal Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), a low-cost model diet plan. The TFP is based on National Academy of Sciences' recommended dietary allowances. The minimum monthly benefit an eligible household may receive is \$10. The maximum depends on the household size. For example, the maximum monthly benefit for a household of three is \$511. The actual benefit amount varies depending on household income, Kafka said.

In order to qualify for the program, a resident of the state must fall into one of two groups: those with a current bank balance (checking and savings combined) under \$2,001, or those with a current bank balance (savings and checking combined) under \$3,251 who share their household with a person or persons age 60 and over, or with a person with a disability.

The person applying must also have an annual household income (before taxes) that is below the following amounts:

- \$15,301 for a household with one person
- \$20,709 for a household with two people
- \$26,117 for a household with three people
- \$31,525 for a household with four people
- \$36,933 for a household with five people

SNAP benefits are issued on the 10th day of every month. Benefits are issued on what is known as an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card that may be used to purchase food. SNAP benefits may not be used to purchase non-food items such as cigarettes, paper products or alcoholic beverages. It is believed using the card is faster and easier than the old paper coupons and also helps lessen loss or theft of SNAP benefits.

Mike Hiltunen, owner of Custer County Market, said the 10th day of each month is significant enough of an event at his store that he has to plan for it, to be sure he has enough food stocked

for those who come to the store to spend their SNAP benefits.

“Those three days (10th-12th of the month) are a 10 percent increase, easily,” he said.

Hiltunen said the grocery store he once owned in Howard received “a big chunk of business” from SNAP, but said it didn’t receive the uptick on the 10th of the month that his store here does, although he said there are more people in Custer, which naturally means more people receiving benefits.

Dan Grapentine, assistant manager at Lynn’s Dakotamart in Custer, said his store feels a surge on the 10th and 11th of a month as well, saying it probably accounts for 10 percent of the store’s business. He added that if the 10th falls on a weekend or if the weather is good, many people take their benefits to Rapid City to shop.

“It does make a difference what day it falls on and whether the road conditions are good,” he said. “If they are, our EBT sales are way down.”

If that’s not the case, the store sees a flood of customers.

“You have to bring in extra help for it and everything,” he said.

Kafka said able-bodied adults without dependent children are limited to three months of SNAP benefits within a 36-month period. Those who are disabled or who have children can receive them indefinitely.

South Dakota has a proven track record for providing accurate benefits to the household it serves with a payment accuracy rate of 99.01 percent for fiscal year 2013, Kafka said.

“We have been a leader in the program for the past 30 years,” Kafka said. “We carefully evaluate each application to make the correct determination. This ensures we provide the correct amount of benefits to individuals eligible to participate in SNAP.”

As part of the commitment to program integrity, Kafka said, the USDA works closely with the states to ensure the accuracy of eligibility and benefit determinations. States that fail to meet standards for issuing its SNAP benefits correctly can be sanctioned by USDA. In addition, all SNAP benefits issued in error must be paid back. The state reviews and tracks replaced EBT cards, out of state shopping patterns and other behaviors that may indicate abuse and warrant further investigation by Office of Fraud and Recoveries staff.

“SNAP benefits are not intended to cover all of a person or family’s food costs; rather, SNAP benefits supplement a family’s food costs by helping with the purchase of food needed for a nutritionally adequate diet,” Kafka said. “Participation in SNAP can help stretch limited budgets, improve nutrition and reduce the risk of diet-related health problems.”

Custer County Chronicle (SD): Saved by SNAP

Former Custer resident says food stamps saved her family

Jason Ferguson

Thursday, April 30th, 2015

LiJane Brunner remembers the eye rolls and the stares well. She was buying a cake, frozen pizzas and soda for a birthday party for one of her four children. And she was doing it with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds (formerly known as food stamps) using a Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

She could sense the people around her weren't thrilled with the purchases she was making with "their money."

"Everybody gets to have a birthday," LiJane said. "Right?"

LiJane, a former Custer resident, wasn't using SNAP by choice, didn't take the choice to sign up for SNAP lightly and certainly didn't want to make a lifestyle out of it. She was one of many people who SNAP advocates point to as the poster child for why the benefits are so necessary—a member of a stable family who fell on hard times and had no other way to dig out of the hole they were in. For them, SNAP as a bridge to better things. It's the reason she supports the program with such passion.

LiJane never dreamed she would have to sign up for SNAP benefits. Her husband had a full-time, well-paying job with BNSF Railroad and she was a fulltime engineering student at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, a senior just about to finish her degree. She had been a stay-at-home mother with her children for years before opting to go back to school to pursue an engineering degree.

Then her husband lost his job. Because of the stagnant economy, many trains carrying manufactured items weren't running, which meant less work at BNSF, a seniority-based company. That meant higher-ranking train engineers and conductors flooded to the area to run coal trains, which meant a furlough for LiJane's husband, James. At the time, the couple had three children—Alden, now 12, Alex, 10, and Emmett, 9. Since then, they have also added Eleanor, 3.

James was able to get railroad unemployment, which covered the cost of the mortgage on the family's home, but not much else. She had some student loans that helped cover her fuel to and from school, but money for food was in short supply.

"We didn't have a lot of expenses, but we had to eat, make our house payments and heat our house," she said.

James continued to search for a job that would pay more than his railroad unemployment. When he lost his job, the children were pulled from day care and he watched them at home. While he struggled to find a job that would pay him enough to put the children back into day care, LiJane was faced with a hard decision—drop out of school so close to her degree and get what would probably be a part-time, low-paying job or swallow her pride and sign up for SNAP. Since she had children to feed, the choice was a relatively easy one.

For six months, while she finished her degree, the family survived with the help of SNAP, skimping and saving and using the disposable income they had to keep a roof over their heads.

It's that experience that makes LiJane cringe when she hears people label those on SNAP as losers or deadbeats.

"I worked really, really hard through that time. It made things possible, but it certainly didn't make things easy," she said. "Being a full-time student is an incredibly hard job, especially if you have children. Even with the support of my husband and family, I would never call that time easy."

LiJane firmly believes that had it not been for SNAP, she would have had to drop out of school, let her loans go into default and, more than likely, never have finished her degree.

"If it weren't for public assistance or food stamps, it would have not been possible," she said. "We had always managed to make everything work and suddenly my husband lost his job. It didn't make sense for me to drop out of school and wait tables. I was so close (to a degree)."

The results have been the ultimate success story. LiJane, now 37, graduated from Mines in May 2010 at the age of 32, and went to work with the Air Force as an environmental engineer. The family now lives in River Falls, Wis., and LiJane made in excess of six figures last year as an environmental engineer. James, an environmental technician himself, mostly stays at home with the children these days.

LiJane believes there are many stories similar to hers out there, families who were saved from poverty by the bridge SNAP benefits created. She said she believes there is a "really unfortunate" public perception that food stamps are abused more than they actually are. She said of the people she knows who have been on food stamps in the past, it was always a short-term step to something better in their life, not a career choice.

"I think it's really unfortunate that perception is out there," she said. "In the long run, I can't even imagine how our life would be if we hadn't been given that option."

wars/2227773

Tampa Bay Tribune (FL): Maintain safety nets

May 1, 2015

Recent editorials have touched on a common theme: poverty. Balancing the state and national budgets is often done by cutting the safety nets for the poor. In the meantime, local agencies are overburdened. Yet as Tampa police Chief Jane Castor stated, the police are neither "cause of or salve for" societal woes.

The civic body is the caretaker of democracy, but cynicism grows amid misinformation and media sensationalism. Nowhere is this more true than with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program. Perhaps citizens have seen the surfer on welfare, but the rate of SNAP fraud is only 1 percent. The other 99 percent include 45 million people, almost half of whom are children. The program has successfully lifted 5 million people out of poverty, provides assistance to the disabled and elderly on limited incomes and, most of all, helps working families make ends meet and get on their feet. SNAP recipients are decreasing as the economy improves.

We cannot let 1 percent of a population speak for the 99 percent of the participants.

Barbra Drake, *Tampa*

http://www.theolympian.com/2015/05/03/3704299_counting-on-rep-heck-to-save-food.html?rh=1

The Olympian (WA): Counting on Rep. Heck to save food aid program

May 3, 2015

Kudos to Robin Evans-Agnew for the thoughtful letter (April 6) on the role of public health in making our lives longer and healthier. It's easy to take these things for granted in our modern age.

Toward the end of the letter is the phrase "all lives matter...and we have work to do so the student nurses we educate will be at the forefront of advocating for equity and social justice..." I so appreciate this approach to educating our healthcare providers of the future. As a nation, we will have an opportunity to demonstrate our belief that "all lives matter."

Our leaders in Congress are in the process of cutting SNAP (food stamps), which helps ensure that our elders, our children, our family members with disabilities, and our working poor have food to eat. SNAP lifted 4.8 million citizens out of poverty in 2013. In our own 10th

Congressional District, over half of the households receiving SNAP had children under 18; 23.6 percent included persons 60 and over; 82 percent were working at some point during the year but qualified for SNAP.

SNAP has an incredibly low fraud rate (1 percent), but despite all this, the U.S. House proposed deep cuts that could lead to 11-12 million children and adults losing access to this essential resource. I hope that Rep. Denny Heck will oppose these cuts and efforts to “fast track” the House bill through the budget reconciliation process.

Ann Rockway

Olympia

<http://www.theolympian.com/2015/05/03/3704300/funding-snap-program-is-good-investment.html>

The Olympian (WA): Funding SNAP program is good investment for kids

May 3, 2015

Happy, healthy, rambunctious kids frolicked on the playground at McKenny Elementary as I walked by this morning belying that one in five kids across our country go to bed hungry. At a time when our food stamp program, SNAP, works to keep that sad statistic from climbing, it is wrong to consider reducing it as is now on the docket in Congress. Please take a few moments to contact your representative and senators to fully fund the SNAP program.

Nancy Curtiss

Olympia

<http://www.chron.com/opinion/letters/article/Wednesday-letters-Food-stamps-Dreamers-Jade-6244374.php>

Houston Chronicle (TX): SNAP testimony

May 5, 2015

Regarding "SNAP woes" editorial (Page B9, April 27), you are right in recognizing that for most recipients, SNAP is not a way of life but a temporary measure to rescue a family in a time of dire need.

I speak from experience. I was a single mother with two young sons when I went back to college so I could provide a better life for us. SNAP (food stamps) made that possible!

My boys thrived. We were on the program for less than two years (that's usual). I got my degree and teaching certification. I've been a taxpayer ever since. I want others to have this same opportunity.

SNAP is a proven success. It is not an expenditure of our tax money but an investment that pays good dividends. I like seeing my tax dollars so well spent. We must preserve SNAP.

[Becky Barnes Hopson](#), Houston

<http://snoho.com/html/letters.html>

Snohomish Tribune (WA): Food Bank Shortages

Fully fund food stamps now

May 5, 2015

To the Editor:

How can this be: front page news noting food bank shortages in the world's richest country? (["Spring brings shortages to local food banks,"](#) April 15 *Snohomish County Tribune*)

This is wrong. There need be no hunger in our country, there is plenty of food for all.

What can be done? Start with fully funding the SNAP program, formerly food stamps.

Call, text, email and tweet your representatives and ask them to support SNAP and to end the causes of hunger: living wages (75 percent of people on food stamps are working), and education for good jobs available to all. This isn't rocket science, we can solve the problem of hunger in America.

Willie Dickerson
Snohomish

http://www.sunjournal.com/news/letters/2015/05/06/w-dickerson-you-can-make-difference/1698662#.VUosexd_ehg.email

Sun-Journal (ME): You can make a difference

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

Active citizenship is one answer. People can vote, speak up for what they believe is right, and give guidance to their representatives and senators.

The group I volunteer with, results.org, has been teaching effective ways to make a difference for 35 years. Right now, that includes building ladders out of poverty by creating support for the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit that lifted 8.8 million Americans out of poverty in 2013, but expire in 2017. Globally, working to end the 6.3 million deaths of children under five years of age and 289,000 pregnancy-related deaths of women.

What can people do? Take a active part in the nation's democracy and use their voices to make a difference.

That is what they can do.

Willie Dickerson, Snohomish, Wash.

<http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/apr/19/u-t-san-diego-letters-to-the-editor-for-april-20/>

San Diego Union-Tribune (CA): Food stamp program must be preserved

April 20, 2015

Congress will vote soon on large cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps).

This would force about one in five hungry San Diego residents off the program.

Have lawmakers forgotten that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, single mothers, the elderly, job hunters, minimum-wage workers (think Walmart) and the underemployed? If SNAP were a corporate program (with just 1 percent of fraud in the system), Congress would hold it up as a model of value and efficiency.

With the escalating income disparity in the United States, Congress should fulfill its democratic/moral obligation to feed the poor by standing up for hungry families and rejecting any budget that proposes cuts to SNAP.

Donna Shanske
Bankers Hill

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SNAP is working, leave it alone

As an American, I am frustrated that Congress continues its assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. The House of Representatives released its new budget and it would serve one purpose — to make the wealthy wealthier and the poor poorer. To help pay for new costly tax cuts, it would convert the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) into a lump-sum payment to states known as block grants. This would force millions of hungry Americans off the program. In Iowa 12.1 percent of the population receives SNAP.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly, and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP has been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children? Do they balk at SNAP's 96 percent accuracy and only 1 percent fraud rate? If SNAP were a corporate program, Congress would be holding it up as a model of effectiveness and efficiency. When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP are working. Congress should stop trying to screw it up.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry families and reject any budget that proposes to cut or restructure SNAP. Call Sen. Joni Ernst at (202) 224-3254 and Rep. Rod Blum at (202) 225-2911.

Judy McDowell
Cedar Rapids

<http://www.press-citizen.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/05/06/snap-beneficial-cut-program/70904880/>

Iowa City Press-Citizen (IA): SNAP is beneficial; don't cut the program

May 7, 2015

Congress is considering deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). Some politicians have even asserted that charity can replace the dollars spent on SNAP. Private charities, such as the Crisis Center, do help meet the needs of the hungry. However, the food provided by food banks/pantries equals only 6 percent of the food provided by federal nutrition programs (SNAP, WIC and school lunches).

A common myth about SNAP is that it is rife with fraud and abuse. In actuality, SNAP is one of the most effective and efficient governmental programs. According to the U.S. Census, SNAP lifted 4.8 million people out of poverty in 2013. It serves over 45 million people per month. Yet, it has one of the highest accuracy rate. Only 1 percent of SNAP benefits paid are attributable to fraud and payment errors were only 3.2 percent in 2013.

My request to Rep. Dave Loebsack, Sen. Joni Ernst and Sen. Chuck Grassley: Don't fix what's not broken."

Suzanne Krogh

Iowa City

<http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/2510290-155/letter-write-your-representative-about-tax>

Salt Lake City Tribune (UT): Write your representative about tax credits

May 15, 2015

Thanks to Matthew Weinstein ("The Mothers Day gift to thousands of single moms: tax credits," May 10), mothers have a chance to keep their families out of poverty.

Of course, that is only if Congress takes action on renewing the provisions of the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credits he talks about. If 21 million working moms write or call their representatives about this, it will definitely happen.

Of course, moms are busy. Perhaps the rest of us can help. A short email or phone call, or just send a copy of the op-ed, to your representatives and /or senators can make all the difference.

Willie Dickerson

Snohomish, Wash.

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20150518/OPINION02/150519282>

Everett Herald (WA): Expand food stamp program

May 19, 2015

The wonderful opportunity to give food to the hungry via the mailman has come and gone. (May 3 Guest Commentary, “[Mailbox drive provides half of food banks' annual supply](#).”) Hopefully this year's drive was successful. But why is it that in the world's richest country that there is so much hunger? And if hunger is “one of the most pressing issues facing our community,” what can be done about it? Support SNAP (food stamps) to start. Instead of cutting this program, expand it to make sure no one is hungry in America. Next, fix the underlying causes of hunger.

Congresswoman Suzan DelBene got a pilot program passed last year to get job training for people on food stamps. This program could be expanded. But over half of the people receiving food stamps are working. Time for a living wage for all workers. Congressman Rick Larsen has been working on raising the minimum wage as a start. Our job as voters is to make sure our elected representatives and leaders know that it is not OK to have 1 in 7 people hungry in Snohomish county. Write an email or make a call and ask them to end this 21st century tragedy.

Willie Dickerson

Snohomish

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/letters/tuesdays-letters-thank-the-train-engineers-rule-book-for-inconveniences/2230150>

Tampa Bay Times (FL): Carson could contribute

May 19, 2015

It is apparent that in some form, safety net programs served Ben Carson in the manner they were meant, as a temporary measure. But we must realize that Carson, who is 65 years old, grew up under different economic and social circumstances from what exist today. His formative years were spent before the war on drugs, loss of factory jobs and an unbalanced tax policy.

As an issue, federal income tax and creating economic mobility offers a common ground for the 99 percent of citizens who feel economic burdens. Very large corporations such as Verizon Communications and General Electric make large profits but pay little federal income tax. Even a wealthy man like Warren Buffett offers the "Buffett rule" as a means of making tax rates fairer

between himself and wage earners in his office. Currently, the House of Representatives is moving legislation to make expiring large corporate tax provisions permanent and enacting new tax cuts for the wealthy.

No such proposal has been made for the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Child Tax Credit, which benefit low-income wage earners. Carson's entry into the campaign could deliver prominent discussion upon economic mobility relevant to current social and economic conditions. Spare us rhetoric that either devolves into nostalgia, a denouncement of the poor, or the same proliferation of current tax policy as beneficial to the 99 percent.

Barbara Drake, Lutz

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-tax-structure-should-help-poor-as-well_54394538

Kitsap Sun (WA): Tax structure should help poor as well

May 19, 2015

Grace West, Bremerton

Robert Reich's column, "[Swoosh a symbol of stagnant wages](#)," May 17, stated that even after six years of economic recovery wages are still going nowhere. I couldn't agree more, and feel that many in Congress are looking to make corporate tax breaks permanent while ignoring the needs of working families.

One of the best ways to help struggling families has been the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). These tax credits support workers in low-wage jobs and lift more children out of poverty than any other program. President Ronald Reagan, who expanded the EITC, called it "The best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure ever to come out of Congress."

Yet critical improvements to the EITC and CTC are set to expire. If they expire, over 16 million Americans, will fall deeper into poverty.

In 2012, Congress passed a tax bill that made many expiring tax breaks for the wealthy and middle class permanent, but only temporarily extended the EITC and CTC until 2017. Stakes are high for million of low wage workers if these provisions expire. For example, a single mother working full time at minimum wage, earning \$14,500, would lose her entire \$1,724 CTC because earnings needed to qualify for even a tiny CTC would increase from \$3,000 to \$14,000.

With wages still low and the wealth gap higher than ever, making EITC and CTC provisions permanent is a step in the right direction.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/05/26/tax-credits-expiring-blobaum/27942089/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Urge Congress members to support tax credits

Stephen Blobaum, West Des Moines, May 26, 2015

If Iowans encounter a member of their Washington congressional delegation during congressional recess, please urge them to support making permanent the 2009 improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. In 2012, Congress passed a huge tax bill that made many expiring tax breaks for the wealthy and middle class permanent, but they only temporarily extended the EITC and CTC improvements.

According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, these provisions affect 84,000 Iowa families and 179,000 Iowa children. If allowed to expire it would push into poverty or make poorer 84,000 Iowans and 41,000 Iowa children. The number of families with both parents or a single parent working 50 to 60 hours a week at one, two, and sometimes three jobs has increased exponentially with families still not making ends meet. Tell them to make these improvements permanent. And remember, there is no recess for these families.

<http://www.pressherald.com/2015/05/26/letter-to-the-editor-follow-protests-of-bigotry-with-policies-to-fix-problem/>

Portland Press Herald (ME): Follow protests of bigotry with policies to fix problem

May 26, 2015

Thank you to the Portland Press Herald for reporting on the racism and bigotry within our state and country. Thanks also to the members of the Portland City Council and School Board who attended the news conference to speak out against ugliness rooted in fear, ignorance and poor policy.

Though I appreciate the words spoken by board members, and the important gesture Portland protesters continue to make, I am concerned with us taking effective action on this matter. Communities of color have long been systemically excluded from policy that provides economic opportunity. Policy is at the heart of the matter, and policymakers like Sens. Angus King and Susan Collins need to know that constituents of Maine will hold them accountable.

According to The Center for Global Policy Solutions 2014 report “Beyond Broke,” for every \$1 in wealth held by white households in 2011, African-Americans held only 6 cents and Hispanics held only 7 cents.

This is a startling and shameful statistic in a nation as wealthy and as powerful as America. Rather than perpetuating the futile and insolent “debate” around which lives matter more, we should be urging those in power to address the unjust widening of the racial wealth gap, the underpinning of poverty for those who are born into a certain background or skin color. Communities of color deserve so much more, and we, as members, allies and as human beings, need to take action to ensure that we can continue to say “and justice for all” with a straight face.

Kristy Martino

RESULTS Seacoast Chapter Volunteer

Kittery Point

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/05/27/head-start-helps-millions-linn/27984973/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Head Start has helped millions of children

Jos G. Linn, West Des Moines, May 27, 2015

Thank you, Charletta Suddeth, for your moving column this week about Head Start [[“50 years later, Head Start still works,”](#) May 21]. Suddeth’s is just one of countless stories of how Head Start has literally helped millions of children and their families over the last half century. In study after study, it’s been shown that Head Start students just like Charletta grow up healthier, do better in school and are more successful as adults. That’s why Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckmann has said investments in programs like Head Start are the best way to spend our tax dollars. That’s why police commissioners around the country have said investments in early learning make our communities stronger and safer. That’s why military leaders have called early childhood education an issue of national security.

Unfortunately, many lawmakers ignore the evidence and make up phony reasons to cut Head Start funding when the truth is, they’d just rather give big corporations another tax cut. And then they fail to invest in quality public school education (are you listening, Iowa legislature?) that help ensure that the benefits of Head Start continue as children get older.

The biggest threat to our future is not ISIS or immigration or gay marriage; it is short-minded politicians who believe that the education of our children is less important than everything else.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/06/12/tax-cuts-help-average-american/71106774/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Tax cuts don't help average American

June 12, 2015

Thank you to the Register for highlighting a critical issue that affects all of us but no one talks about — asset poverty [[“Editorial: Too many Americans live on the edge.”](#) June 10]. According to the Center for Enterprise Development, nearly 44 percent of all American households were “liquid asset poor” in 2011 (latest data available), which means if faced with a loss of income, they wouldn't have enough cash or savings to survive above the poverty line for more than three months.

Yet, Congress' response to this crisis is to lavish more tax cuts on the wealthy and corporate America. How does repealing the estate tax for multi-millionaires help a worker at Wal-Mart save for retirement? How does giving big corporations amnesty for billions in overseas profits help a pre-school teacher save up for a decent car?

If Congress truly cares about our economy, in addition to the Register's recommendations, they'd also make vital improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit permanent and enact the Financial Security Credit, which helps low and moderate income Americans build savings. It's time we started investing in policies that help more people create wealth, rather than simply rewarding those who already have it. If we don't, we'll all pay the price.

— Jos G. Linn, West Des Moines

<http://www.chron.com/opinion/letters/article/Monday-letters-Jerusalem-Stephen-Klineberg-6324504.php>

Houston Chronicle (TX): Thinking health

June 15, 2015

Regarding "A matter of health" (Page B8, Thursday), thank you for the editorial which warned us of the dire and consequential human suffering that would befall many Americans (our family, friends, and neighbors) should the Supreme Court rule against federal subsidies for non-state health exchanges. Thank you for taking a firm, clear stand on the side of people's well-being over abstract ideology.

Our country needs a national health program; insurance companies do not need to profit off of our suffering.

[Kathleen Duncan](#), LaPorte

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-change-tax-policy-to-support-the-poor_33519736

Kitsap Sun (WA): Change tax policy to support the poor

June 18, 2015

Donna Munro, Bremerton

Change tax policy to support the poor

I was happy to see two letters speaking out alluding to our obscene wealth and tax disparity. ("Fairness in tax policy will help state," June 16, and "Try to create change for the middle class," June 16).

Did you know:

The top 1 percent of Washington state's households pay just 2.8 percent of their incomes in Washington state taxes, while the poorest 20 percent of residents pay 16.9 percent.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the tax code gives corporations special tax breaks that have reduced what is supposed to be a 35 percent tax rate to an actual tax rate of 13 percent. In 2012, the average American tax payer making \$50,000 per year paid a staggering \$6,000 in taxes for direct and indirect corporate subsidies.

One of our country's most effective anti-poverty strategies, important improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit, are in danger of expiring if Congress doesn't act. Yes, we need to change the tax code.

Meanwhile the EITC, a lifeline to the poor, generates large decreases in poverty and substantial increases in employment, as well as decreasing the number of single parents receiving cash welfare. Shoot an email to your members of Congress and urge them to support EITC. (Google their name to find their website.)

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-help-working-families-to-end-hunger_04234407

Kitsap Sun (WA): Help working families to end hunger

June 25, 2015

Diana Tyree-Eddy, Hansville

Help working families to end hunger

Thank you for your timely article, “No break from hunger,” June 23. I felt this so much as a teacher in Bremerton last week as school was ending.

Besides our wonderful school lunch program, one of the best ways to combat poverty is through the tax code. Unfortunately, leaders in Congress are working to enact more tax breaks for big corporations and wealthy individuals while millions of working families face an uncertain financial future. Critical improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) — two of our most effective tools for ending poverty — will soon expire. If Congress allows that to happen, 16 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into or deeper into poverty.

Tell to put Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and Rep. Kilmer to put working families first. We need to permanently extend the EITC and CTC improvements now!

<http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns-magazine/june-2015/letters/>

University of Washington Magazine (WA): Gentle Janis

Janis Avery’s search “for solutions to suffering” is inspiring Fostering Hope, March. If we all do something to support the end of suffering, the world will be a much better place. For example, asking our representatives and senators not to cut the SNAP program (formerly called food stamps) will help fight hunger in America. Northwest Harvest says it can provide only one of every 24 bags of food needed by hungry families, though there are up to 700 food drives a year! With at least one in five children not sure about their next meal, taking the time for a call or email to lawmakers is critical.

Willie Dickerson, '73, '94
Snohomish

<http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/07/03/letters-editor-police-chases-riverside-park/29666029/>

Detroit Free Press (MI): Keep health care affordable in the U.S.

I appreciated reading your recent editorial asking to “Give Up Attempts to End Obamacare.” Thanks for pointing out that everyone would be better off if the opponents would work to improve the law rather than repeal it. Our healthcare system is now similar to the one that Germany has, which is working very well. But in order for it to work, lawmakers must regulate the insurance and healthcare industry to keep costs down. Close regulation to keep costs down

has been what made the German health insurance model work so well. Before Obamacare, too many Americans were going bankrupt due to such high medical costs. Congress should step up to regulate the health insurance industry to keep costs down rather than attempting to repeal or destroy the Affordable Care Act.

Yvonne Wyborny

Westland

http://qctimes.com/news/opinion/mailbag/advocate-for-tax-fairness/article_334a4c17-f3fb-5ae7-ad29-132a4d476e54.html

Quad-City Times (IA): Advocate for tax fairness

July 06, 2015

Tell Congress to protect working families. Poverty data released last September 2013 shows more than 45 million Americans are still living in poverty, including over 14 million children. Specifically, improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) are tax credits that lifted 8.8 million people out of poverty in 2013 and are set to expire if Congress doesn't act.

Amplify your voice on this issue by writing to members of Congress, urging them to support tax fairness and expand economic mobility in America by ending poverty. Urge lawmakers to protect and expand the EITC and CTC as their top priority. EITC and CTC are key supports for low-income working families and can play a role in combating wealth inequality. If you need letter writing ideas, see www.results.org. If you're interested in working to alleviate poverty in the Clinton area, contact Lori Freudenberg at 563-242-7611 to join a local advocacy group.

Learn more about this topic by coming to the Franciscan Peace Center Social Justice movie on Thursday, July 16 at 6:30 p.m. at The Canticle, 841 13th Ave. North, Clinton. Our movie is "Inequality for All," featuring professor, best-selling author, and Clinton cabinet member Robert Reich. Reich demonstrates how the widening income gap has a devastating impact on the economy and explains how massive consolidation of wealth by a few threatens the viability of the workforce and foundation of democracy. For more information, visit www.ClintonFranciscans.com.

Lori Freudenberg
Community Outreach Director, Franciscan Peace Center
Clinton

<http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-congress-should-su>

The Kitsap Sun (WA): Congress should support families, kids

Letters July 16, 2015

Grace West, Bremerton

I disagree with Jay Ambrose's column "Listen to Sanders, and be afraid," July 9, especially where he criticizes Senator Sanders on childhood hunger, saying "that while there is no perfect means for keeping childhood hunger at bay, there are all kinds of effective programs in place and the Census Bureau tells us instances of it are exceedingly rare."

I haven't seen these instances of childhood hunger being rare in Bremerton, where over 60 percent of our school age children qualify for free and reduced lunches. Yes, there are effective programs such as the Earned Income Tax credit (EITC), which supports workers in low-wage jobs, and the Child Tax Credit CTC), which lifts more children out of poverty than any other program.

However, critical improvements to the EITC and CTC are set to expire. If they expire, 8 million American children will fall into or deeper into poverty.

Congress will soon be focusing on several pieces of tax legislation, which includes pushing to make corporate tax breaks permanent. If corporate tax breaks are made permanent this year without a deal for working family tax credits, where is tax parity? Please ask Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and Representative Derek Kilmer to support tax policies that help struggling families make ends meet by making the expiring EITC and CTC provision as their top tax priority.

Congress needs to show its support for hard working families!

<http://blog.thenewstribune.com/letters/2015/07/16/tax-loopholes-for-the-rich/>

Tacoma Tribune (WA): TAXES: Don't let tax credits for poor expire

Letter by Donna M. Schindler Munro, on July 16, 2015

Re: "Jeb Bush and the laziness doctrine" (Paul Krugman column).

It seems that Jeb Bush is already off to a wobbly start, since he managed to immediately stuff one foot in his mouth. It was his brother, George W., who predicted his tax cuts on capital gains and dividends would usher in an "ownership society." But the opposite happened.

In 2000, one of every eight taxpayers had capital gains income. In 2012, it was one in 15. Capital

gains is taxed at a much lower rate than regular income, and wealthier people enjoy this tax loophole.

Since the Wall Street crash of 2008, more than 99 percent of all new income has gone to the top 1 percent. Yes, we need progressive taxation included in a reformed tax code. Meanwhile about 20 percent of our U.S. kids live in poverty.

What Congress needs to do immediately is to make the key temporary improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit permanent. These tax credits are set to expire, throwing millions of families into, or deeper into poverty.

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/John-Breunig-The-best-way-to-feed-a-stranger-6405303.php>

Stamford Advocate (CT): John Breunig: The best way to feed a stranger

July 25, 2015

The temperature was scraping the century mark while I was walking up 12th Street in downtown Washington, D.C., the other day. I'd been nursing a soda for long enough that the ice had surrendered.

A homeless man picked me out from among the worker bees and tourists and began his standard pitch. I was about to hand him a few dollars when I had to reach over to prevent my steaming 3-year-old son from taking a hard right onto Pennsylvania Avenue. The man recognized I had my hands full and pointed to the drink in my hand.

"Can I just have that?"

I handed over the cup, which amounted to a few sips of tepid Pepsi. He nodded in gratitude and walked away.

The hungry walk among us everywhere in the United States; we're simply more aware of their presence in our cities, whether it's Washington and New York or Stamford and Bridgeport. This man's request resonated because it was the first time anyone had asked me to share sustenance instead of cash. It also happened to occur while I was in our nation's capital for the annual conference of RESULTS, a grass-roots group of activists advocating for effective measures to end global poverty.

This is the awkward part. RESULTS invited me to receive an award for writing about issues related to poverty. Organizers understood my trepidation given the work they do as lobbyists. I consulted my bosses, co-workers and peers from other papers. Ultimately, we agreed all lobbyists are not equal. The worst feed obscene bonuses instead of the hungry. The best try to save the lives of strangers.

I was humbled by the response to what amounted to a few columns and editorials, but I am not being modest when I say there should have been far more competition for this award. While participating in a panel discussion at the conference with other members of the media, some in the audience seemed startled when I said I consider many of them to be journalists of a sort. They prioritize thorough and precise research and use persuasive stories to put faces on the numbers.

There is not enough coverage of these issues in the media. The conference drew 530 people from 47 states and 23 countries who joined staff members to hear from notables such as South African singer and humanitarian [Yvonne Chaka Chaka](#); Sister [Simone Campbell](#), known for leading the Nuns on the Bus trips that champion social justice; economist [Jeffrey Sachs](#) and Nobel Prize winner [Muhammad Yunus](#).

The Beltway gathering that drew the ink and pixels in the Washington Post that Monday, though, was the [Novelty Salt and Pepper Shakers Club Convention](#), where some 200 collectors from five countries celebrated the hoarding of unused condiment dispensers (one participant recalled seeing a “Jetsons” pair once sell for \$7,000). “Star Wars Day” at Nationals Park used the Force to compel several Post staffers to cover the event, which included a centerpiece in the Style section four days later.

I’m hardly in a position to snipe, having assigned or covered more than my share of similar diversions in Connecticut, including conventions celebrating Pez dispensers and crossword puzzles. ComicConn in [Mohegan Sun Convention Center](#) next month will surely attract an abundance of fans and media attention.

It’s easy for readers to turn the page or swipe the screen to avoid learning more about the hungry. It’s easier to wear masks at a comic book convention than to look a homeless person in the eye. So I take solace in knowing RESULTS is showing a surge in volunteer participation after 35 years.

Throughout the conference, RESULTS advocates heard story after story of suffering in the world before hundreds of them stormed Capitol Hill. A journalist’s job is to show — not tell — but the numbers and the details are numbing.

On my last night in Washington, I walked around the corner to get dinner. In the balmy twilight, on the side of the hotel, another stranger approached to ask if I could help him get a meal. I bought him dinner. He repaid me with local knowledge about dining options.

It’s hard not to feel helpless while offering nothing more than sips of warm sugar water and a cold meal on a sweltering day. It’s hard to replicate hunger in prose. That doesn’t mean members of the media shouldn’t try. Income inequality continues to widen while we become increasingly addicted to click bait. There won’t always be awards for this brand of journalism, but there are rewards.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the hotel wall, RESULTS activists set their gaze past the one to find the best way to lift the many. They are saving lives. They are trying to save the world. No masks or costumes required.

[John Breunig](#) is editorial page editor of The Advocate and Greenwich Time. He can be reached at John.breunig@scni.com; 203-964-2281; <http://twitter.com/johnbreunig>.

http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letters-to-the-editor-july/article_236978c2-3714-5363-a842-fdc6a934a88c.html

Santa Fe New Mexican (NM): Righting the wrong

July 27, 2015

Right on, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, with Sunday's editorial ("Proposed SNAP rules hurt the hungry," Our View, July 12) Thank you for this informative, thoughtful, hard-hitting piece. The governor's proposal (again) to prove that she is tough on the poor and most vulnerable who receive food assistance needs to be stopped (again). Let's convince her to focus on the 20 percent that your editorial cites who need but don't seek food stamps (SNAP) because of lack of access to transportation, insufficient or confusing information, and too much red tape.

Lydia Pendley

Santa Fe

http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/article_11ce1519-2f0d-56f5-a72c-7f5dbda707c0.html

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (MO): Make sure vulnerable children are getting fed

July 30, 2015

Despite efforts made to feed hungry children over summer vacation, kids are still going hungry each year when school lets out for two months ("Fighting summer hunger," July 24). There's no way a hungry child can reach his or her full potential and excel in school. The article gives a shocking yet real statement that will stay true as long as children who really need help can't afford good food or simply don't have access to a feeding site.

When a group of RESULTS advocates for child/maternal health lobbied in Rep. Ann Wagner's office last week, nutrition issues in global and U.S. poverty were discussed. Within a few days, Wagner signed on to a letter to the president encouraging support for maternal/child health programs. We hope that our elected representatives in Congress like Wagner will support U.S. programs like SNAP and tax credits for working families so that vulnerable children everywhere are being fed.

Yara Levin • Town and Country

<http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-aug-11-2015/nnFkH/>

Austin American-Statesman (TX): Re: Aug. 5 commentary, “End childhood hunger in our communities.”

August 11, 2015

NFL player Kelvin Beachum is absolutely correct in saying that federal programs in addition to local charities are necessary to address child hunger. In addition to child nutrition programs, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) can help low-wage parents afford to feed their children. The evidence shows that these programs encourage work. Only taxpayers who are working can claim the credits, therefore encouraging them to work more hours.

Children in families receiving the EITC earn more income as adults. These credits lift millions of people out of poverty each year and are our best tool for reducing poverty among children. EITC and CTC refunds tend to get spent quickly and locally, generating \$1.50 for each \$1.00 spent. Both programs are efficient ways to reduce child hunger.

MARTHA ROGERS, AUSTIN

http://www.parkrecord.com/opinion/ci_28623009/letters-editor-aug-8-11-2015

Park City Record (UT): Don't let politics get in the way of good policy

August 11, 2015

Editor:

It might be hard to believe with Sen. Mike Lee attempting to defund Obamacare via the federal highway bill, but Sen. Lee and President Barack Obama actually agree on one tax policy.

Lee and Obama agree that the most effective anti-poverty tools are the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). And they are right. A recent study found the EITC and the CTC are even more effective than previously thought--they are responsible for increasing employment rates for single parents. We already knew it lifted millions out of poverty--including millions of children--every year.

The EITC and CTC are a rare thing: Republican ideas that Democrats like. But being Washington, they can't let an agreement get in the way of politics and their dispute on how to fund the EITC and CTC are endangering these critical programs' survival. The EITC and CTC are too important to be political football for hundreds of working families in Utah--and every other state in the Union.

Join me in contacting our congressional delegation. Tell them to stop playing for the cameras and start working together on renewing and expanding the EITC and CTC.

David Billings

Salt Lake City

<http://www.thespectrum.com/story/opinion/2015/09/03/tax-credits-low-income-utah/71644228/>

The Spectrum (UT): Tax credits critical for Utah

September 3, 2015

What do hard-working, low-income Utah families need to keep up? Cash. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit provide low-income families with a once-a-year cash bonus. A recent interview of Utah families shows how some Utahns use this money to: pay medical bills, pay off debts, save for a home, provide educational opportunities for their kids, and—for some families—simply buy necessities.

Since being implemented in 1975, the EITC has received broad bipartisan support. Additionally, in 2009, three provisions were temporarily added to the EITC. These provisions eliminated a marriage penalty, provided families with more than two children with additional tax credits, and eased qualification requirements for families with very low incomes.

These temporary provisions help 115,000 families with 258,000 children here in Utah. Sadly, we risk losing these vital provisions if they are not made permanent.

Please help Utah families by calling Senator Hatch and request these provisions be made permanent.

Debbie Baskin

Salt Lake City

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/Soifer-Combating-poverty-one-person-and-one-6486061.php>

Houston Chronicle (TX): Facing up to grinding poverty (Op-ed)

September 4, 2015

By Isabelle Soifer

It's 4 a.m. Lisa rises before the sun to douse her face in cold water at the local church because she doesn't have running water at home. As she returns "home," a dilapidated shack, she is reminded of the unreliable air conditioner, clogged sinks and a toilet that won't flush. Her place reeks of the smell of urine, not belonging to her or those of any other human, but rather to unwelcome pests. Meanwhile, scattered in all this mess are her five children, stretched out in whatever comfortable sleeping corners they can find. She sees her children off to school and work, and then proceeds to her own job as a dishwasher, with hours that are not always guaranteed. This is the picture of poverty in our very own backyard, of our beloved Houston.

Thousands of residents in the Houston region live in similar conditions to those of Lisa and her family. As of 2013, nearly one-fifth of Harris County's 4.2 million population was estimated to be below the poverty line; 27.4 percent are children. Nearly 400,000 individuals were estimated to be living in households with Supplemental Security Income, cash public assistance income or the federal assistance program known as food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In addition, income segregation continues to aggravate the divide between the haves and have-nots. As described in the July 5 Houston Chronicle article, "The Divide," Houston epitomizes the growing gap in the U.S. between the rich and poor, where the fates of individuals such as Lisa are frequently determined by their ZIP codes.

However, poverty is about more than the lack of physical necessities and access to opportunities. According to Truong Lam, a member of Rice University's Coalition on Hunger and Homelessness and co-founder of its student consultant program OWLSHelp, poverty also means a mental state in which an individual feels helpless, invisible and as if they are being held prisoner in a city that cannot lift them out of poverty. Programs such as OWLSHelp not only address clients' housing, financial and education needs, but also provide the one-on-one attention and comprehensive care that is sorely lacking in Houston, where many social service caseworkers are often assigned up to 50 individuals at a time.

Having access to tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) also provide a sense of relief and security, and can make all the difference for a working family struggling to get out of poverty. Results, a nonprofit advocacy organization, is making a push for policy makers both in Washington, D.C., and across the country to protect these tax credits. The EITC for low- and moderate-income workers encourages and rewards work and raises living standards, while the CTC offsets part of the cost of childrearing.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, each year from 2011 to 2013, both tax credits helped to lift about 1.2 million Texans out of poverty, including 663,000 children. However, critical provisions of the tax credits that were enacted in 2009 are set to expire in 2017. If these provisions expire, 915,000 children and 1.8 million Texans overall will be pushed into — or deeper into — poverty.

The grassroots approach of organizations such as OWLSHelp and the policy-focused work of Results are vital to successfully combating poverty in Houston and Texas. Texas senators and our representatives in Congress must do their part to help reduce and end poverty. The first step is to make protection of the EITC and CTC a priority during the upcoming election season and for terms thereafter.

Lisa needs these financial provisions so that she can go to work without having to worry about whether her kids will have food in their stomachs, a roof over their heads and everything they need for school. Supporting Lisa and other struggling mothers like her not only provides a brighter future for their children but is also our best hope for the health and prosperity of our city.

Soifer is a member of Results, a nonprofit organization focused on ending the worst aspects of poverty. She is beginning a master's program at Columbia University studying anthropology, with a focus on urban and poverty studies.

http://www.parkrecord.com/opinion/ci_28759998/letters-editor-sept-5-8-2015

Park City Record (UT): Senator Hatch, please help Utah families

September 5, 2015

Editor:

What do hard-working, low-income Utah families need to keep up? Cash. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit provide low-income families with a once a year cash bonus.

A recent interview by the United Way of Salt Lake and Community Action Partnership of Utah shows how some Utahns use this money to: pay medical bills, pay off debts, save for a home, provide educational opportunities for their kids, and -- for some families -- simply buy necessities, such as shoes.

Since being implemented in 1975, the EITC has received broad bipartisan support. Additionally, in 2009, during the Great Recession, three provisions were temporarily added to the EITC. These provisions eliminated a marriage penalty, provided families with more than two children with additional tax credits, and eased qualification requirements for families with very low incomes.

These temporary provisions help 115,000 families with 258,000 children here in Utah. Sadly, we risk losing these vital provisions if they are not made permanent.

Your voice is needed: call Senator Hatch, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, at (202) 224-5251 and ask that he make permanent these key provisions to the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Debbie Baskin, RESULTS volunteer

Park City

<http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/2910069-155/letter-earned-income-tax-credit-worth>

Salt Lake City Tribune (UT): Earned Income Tax Credit worth renewing

September 5, 2015

Do you know there is an amazing federal program that helps move families from welfare to self-sufficiency? The Earned Income Tax Credit rewards hard-working, low-income families with an increasing tax benefit the more they work up to a maximum level.

In a well-regarded study, the EITC was found to move more single mothers from welfare to work during the 1990s than either welfare reform or the strong economy.

Research has shown this once a year tax credit is most often used to pay for necessities, repair homes, maintain vehicles that are needed to get to work, and in some cases pay for education and training to boost earning power.

In 2009, temporary provisions helped make the EITC and Child Tax Credit more family friendly by removing a marriage penalty and extending the benefit to families with more than two children. Sadly we risk losing these provisions if they are not renewed, and 115,000 Utah families with 258,000 children will lose all or some of their tax credit.

Please call Sen. Orrin Hatch and ask him to make these pro-family provisions a permanent part of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Debbie Baskin

Salt Lake City

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/letters/wednesdays-letters-psc-decisions-made-in-the-sunshine/2244690>

Tampa Bay Times (FL): Help for the working poor

September 9, 2015

Thank you for your astute editorial regarding employment progress as well as the "need for improvements that could lift millions out of poverty and stabilize families on the brink of financial collapse." The statement encapsulates one of the greatest challenges the nation faces.

In the 30 years between 1949 and 1979, individual incomes of varying classes increased with symmetry. However, between 1980 and 2010, 47 percent of the working population realized a small amount of income growth — between 7 percent and 11 percent — while the lowest-income worker's pay decreased 7 percent. Income for the upper 20 percent of workers increased 23 percent; for the upper 5 percent it was 73 percent; and the top 1 percent gained 224 percent.

In October, when the U.S. House votes on the transportation bill, our representatives will have the opportunity to, at the very least, sustain an important tax policy that has kept 1,212,000 Floridians out of poverty. They should vote to make permanent the improvements in Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. In Florida, 537,000 children would fall further into poverty or become poorer without Congress' support. A person who works full time should not be living in poverty.

Barbara Drake, *Lutz*

<http://www.alaskastar.com/2015-09-09/results-lobbies-congress-advocate-working-poor#.VgFKWN9VhBf>

Chugiak-Eagle River Star (AK): RESULTS lobbies Congress to advocate for working poor (Op-ed)

09/09/2015

I arrived in Washington, D.C. in early June, joining the annual influx of college students in the nation's capitol for summer internships. I had accepted a position as a U.S. Poverty Campaigns Intern at RESULTS, a nonpartisan grassroots advocacy organization. RESULTS is a movement of passionate, committed people who use their collective voice to influence political decisions to bring an end to poverty. RESULTS volunteers span generations and geography, from college students in Miami to retirees in Anchorage, and this summer I was welcomed into the movement.

Before I arrived in Washington, D.C., I subscribed to a professional definition of the word "lobbyist." Images of wealthy businessmen persuading legislators came to mind. This is no longer the case. My experience at RESULTS was rewarding and empowering, and I was able to witness the power that constituents have as lobbyists.

A trip to Capitol Hill is not necessary, although I recommend a visit to Washington, D.C. –the monuments, museums, and taxidermy in Rep. Don Young's office make for excellent photo opportunities.

Our members of Congress return to Alaska many times throughout the year when Congress is on recess, which presents opportunities for meetings. Writing letters, making phone calls, and sending emails are all options as well, which are actions that take relatively little time, but make a real impact.

Far from the Chugach Mountains and the midnight sun, I met with Sen. Lisa Murkowski, Sen. Dan Sullivan, and Rep. Don Young. The topic of discussion? Tax policy. Specifically, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC). Together, these credits support millions of low-income working families in the United States. In Alaska alone, 52,000 families, including 8,000 military and veteran families, rely on the EITC and CTC. Key provisions of these credits are set to expire in 2017, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. If

this occurs, 16 million Americans, including 7.7 million children, will either fall into poverty or be pushed more deeply into it.

These credits also benefit the economy, putting \$102 million back into Alaska's economy in 2012. I met with our members of Congress to ask them to save these key provisions of the EITC and CTC to ensure that hardworking low-income Alaskans are prioritized and protected in upcoming congressional negotiations.

Volunteerism is woven deep into the fabric of American culture; from food pantries to schools citizens volunteer their time to contribute to their local communities. At the RESULTS International Conference in July, a gathering of volunteers and partners from 47 states and 23 countries, a simple graphic explained the power of citizen advocacy. The graphic illustrated that one hour at a food pantry may feed 50 people for one day, but one hour of advocating for investments in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or funding for child nutrition programs can feed millions of people for many years. That is the power of advocacy.

Rather than complaining to our neighbors and coworkers about the state of the nation we must channel our concerns and visions for the future of Alaska and the United States into positive civic engagement. As citizens of a representative democracy we have the opportunity to speak with our representatives whether through writing a letter, making a phone call, or meeting in person. Too few people take advantage of these opportunities, but in order to sustain a healthy democracy, citizen advocacy is vital.

RESULTS trains and supports its volunteers, empowering them to effectively advise policymakers and guide them towards decisions that improve access to health, education, and economic opportunity in the United States and globally. Whether in Chugiak or on Capitol Hill, contact Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Representative Young; share your thoughts, tell your personal stories, and make your voice heard. Together, we will make a difference.

Susan Fleurant is a 2012 graduate of Chugiak High School, a senior at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and a 2015-2016 RESULTS REAL Change Fellow. For more information on about how to get involved in anti-poverty advocacy with RESULTS, contact her at fleurant.susan@gmail.com or visit www.results.org.

<http://www.thespectrum.com/story/opinion/2015/09/14/america-tax-credits-baskin-letter/72246420/>

The Spectrum (UT): America needs tax credits

September 14, 2015

Debbie Baskin makes an important suggestion about helping Utah families in her [letter to the editor](#). ('Tax credits critical for Utah,' The Spectrum & Daily News, September 3, 2015).

The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit do more to keep Americans out of poverty than any other program (except Social Security). Making these tax credits permanent with the important parts Ms. Baskin spoke of will insure families have a leg up to move to self-sufficiency. Certainly worth the time to make a call to ask our elected representatives to make it a priority.

Willie Dickerson

Snohomish, Washington

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article35347065.html>

Tacoma News Tribune: TAXES: Don't let vital tax benefit expire

September 15, 2015

I certainly agree with state Rep. Drew Stokesbary's Viewpoint, "It's time to reform Washington's most regressive tax" ([TNT, 9-13](#)).

That school districts must rely on local property taxes for the most basic school funding is amazingly shortsighted. Our kids are our future!

The top 1 percent of Washington state's households pay about 3 percent of their incomes in Washington state taxes, while the poorest 20 percent of residents pay about 17 percent.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a federal income tax credit for low-income workers. But important improvements to it are set to expire. Most EITC recipients get the credit for two years or less. We need to support this lifeline.

Yes, we need tax reform, both state and federal. One child in five in the U.S. lives in poverty, the highest of any major country. Our leaders need to hear from us.

Donna Schindler Munro, Bremerton

<http://www.dailylobo.com/article/2015/09/letter-trujillo>

Daily Lobo (NM): That the United States doesn't care for its poor is monstrous

September 17, 2015

Editor,

September brings with it the start of many occasions: football seasons, the beginning of fall and, most important to me, the latest census numbers regarding poverty in the United States.

Unfortunately, the tragedy of poverty continues in America with nearly 47 million Americans living in poverty. It was my hope that these numbers would improve. The fact is the numbers are getting worse. To think that the self-proclaimed greatest nation in the world would allow its citizens to be treated this unfairly is a disaster.

Poverty was my life as I was growing up. I was raised by my grandmother for most of my life. The only income she had was that of a social security check that would barely pay for the apartment we lived in. We received food stamps on the eighth of each month, but by the 28th we were living off pinto beans. Most summer and fall days you could find me, my grandma and my little brother walking the streets of the south valley picking quelites (greens) from the side of the road just to add flavor to the beans. On other days we would climb into the trees near our apartment and get eggs from the nests. Pigeon eggs, I presume.

Later in life, tax time became significant because that was our Christmas. For most families Dec. 25 brings cheer, gifts and a joyful time. For us as children, it was another day. As children your Christmas joy comes in the form of gifts; our gift didn't come until the first week of February. That's when the tax return would come in and we would get a couple toys, a football, basketball and a new pair of shoes.

This is why September now means so much to me. I see the number of people living in poverty and I want to speak for the child living a life like mine and make sure they are getting what they need. I want parents not to worry about how they might feed their children. I want to make sure hard-working people get that tax return so they can fix their car or replace that broken washing machine. And maybe a child gets Christmas in February. I remember what that did for me. How on that day I lit up brighter than any Christmas light.

We must protect the programs that help lift people out of poverty. Tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit lifted more than 8 million people out of poverty last year. I urge you to let your voice be heard. If you are poor, speak loud and without shame, for there is no shame in needing help -- especially the help that comes in the form of tax credits that you've earned. These are not handouts, they are well-deserved tax credits that families deserve. Congress must save key provisions in the EITC and CTC, making hardworking families, not wealthy corporations, the top priority.

Sincerely,

Andy Trujillo

CNM Student

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/editorials/caucus/2015/09/18/editorial-stop-demonizing-americans-using-food-assistance/32501439/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Stop demonizing Americans using food assistance (Editorial)

September 18, 2015

Although the GOP presidential debates have featured little discussion about poor Americans, politicians have numerous options for helping them. From increasing the minimum wage to tax credits to funding libraries, there's an action every politician can get behind. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's idea for lending a hand: Make low-income people pee in a cup.

During a recent visit to Iowa, the Republican presidential candidate reiterated his support for making people who apply for food stamps undergo a drug test. The objective, he said, is to ensure they are clean so they can get jobs. He ignores the fact that [the majority](#) of able-bodied Americans using the food assistance program do work. In fact, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has proven effective in supporting work, according to data analyzed by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: More than 80 percent of recipients work in the year before or the year after receiving SNAP.

Yet Walker told [The Huffington Post](#): "It's not a punitive thing; it's a progressive thing."

Actually, it is a not-allowed-by-federal-law thing. It is also a demonize-the-poor thing. But his effort is hardly a surprise.

Republicans have repeatedly advocated drug testing for Americans applying for cash welfare. Courts have repeatedly put a stop to the practice. And the lessons learned from these ordeals contradict the stereotype that people who rely on public benefits are addicted to drugs.

A 2011 Florida law required anyone seeking cash welfare to undergo a drug test. During the few months before a judge issued an injunction, more than 4,000 applicants submitted to a drug test. Only about 100 failed. Welfare recipients actually use drugs at lower rates than the general population.

An especially noteworthy twist on the Florida story: The law specified that the state must reimburse applicants who passed the drug test. Taxpayers doled out more than \$100,000 for those payments. Instead of saving a penny, the entire charade ended up costing the state. Ultimately a federal judge struck down the law for trampling on Floridians' Fourth Amendment rights.

Yet wasting taxpayer money, evidence and those pesky constitutional rights don't matter much to those on a mission to portray the poor as scofflaws sponging off the system.

Interestingly, Walker and politicians have not demanded bodily fluids from other Americans who benefit from publicly funded programs. They don't target seniors on Medicaid, corporate

executives enjoying tax incentives, farm subsidy recipients or children eating free lunch at school. We've heard no demands for drug tests to receive a Social Security check or Pell grant. But if you're a financially struggling American seeking a meager amount of federal money in the form of cash welfare or food stamps, these politicians are thirsting for your urine.

It's not because the poor are using more drugs or abusing public benefits. It's not to help them get jobs. It's not to save taxpayer money. It's because stereotyping this group of Americans is easier than actually helping them.

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-tax-credit-also-boosts-community_35783701

The Kitsap Sun (WA): Tax credit also boosts community

Sept. 18, 2015

It's heartening to see recent articles and columns in the Kitsap Sun that showed support for our entire community ("50 years of giving a Head Start," Sept. 15;" Salvation Army shows milestone with new kitchen," Sept. 11; "United Way support: 'It's time'", Sept. 20).

In 1952, corporate America paid 32 percent of all federal taxes. Today, despite record-breaking profits, they pay less than 10 percent. Since the Wall Street crash of 2008, more than 90 percent of all new income has gone to the top 1 percent.

The Earned Income Tax Credit is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. Statistics show that the EITC succeed at helping families get back on their feet, such that the EITC recipient pays more in federal income taxes over time than she/he receives in EITC benefits. Most EITC recipients get the credit for two years or less.

But important improvements to the EITC are set to expire, which will throw millions of people deeper into poverty. I applaud the unsung volunteers and others who work in the above-mentioned nonprofit programs locally. EITC also makes a huge lifetime difference to millions. Our members of Congress need to support it.

Donna Munro, Bremerton

http://www.publicopiniononline.com/opinion/ci_28853034/editorial-we-can-do-more-help-fellow-citizens

Chambersburg Public Opinion: We can do more to help fellow citizens (Editorial)

09/21/2015

Mike Ross hit the nail on the head when he told a gathering of United Way supporters that for a county like ours \$750,000 is not an aggressive goal for the local nonprofit organization's annual fundraising drive.

With a population of 152,000-plus, that's just under \$5 a person or \$20 for a family of four, annually.

Taking into consideration that about 12 percent of our population lives in poverty — at our below what the federal government considers to be the poverty level — and can't give even that nominal amount, those that can donate still wouldn't be overburdened if everyone gave their fair share.

In fact, \$750,000 is a pretty modest goal when you compare it to the portion of our population that could give modestly and those who can and often do give generously.

Our local United Way agency has 32 "partner" agencies that benefit from your donations, and these are primarily organizations who provide an extra measure of help to our neediest citizens.

These are non-profits that support the changing needs across the community, and carry out missions that include educating disadvantaged children through tutoring and other programs, providing health services and income assistance to our neediest citizens.

These agencies touch thousands of lives each year.

During United Way's kickoff luncheon Wednesday, Ross talked about the needs that are met by the agencies receiving United Way funding.

We have folks here in Franklin County for whom every day is a struggle, he said.

He's right.

When an adult is trying to support a family on minimum wage, or even the \$12 or so an hour that some of our warehouses pay, every day is a struggle. It's a struggle on those wages even if the household has two wage earners, especially if one or more of the partners is working part time or making just minimum wage.

For those who are fortunate to have household incomes within the median range for the county — about \$52,000 annually — it's easy to forget how tough it is to live payday to payday, counting pennies in the days before the next paycheck comes in so you can put another \$5 worth of gas in the car to get to work the next day.

So, if your company supports United Way and asks you to make a pledge, consider it. Here's a chance to pay it forward and help your community.

A pledge of even \$1 a week would mean an additional \$52 a week in the campaign coffers. A pledge of \$2, \$5 or \$10 a week would do so much more.

<http://www.tbo.com/list/news-opinion-editorials/editorial-smart-way-to-help-working-poor-20150922/>

Tampa Tribune (FL): Smart way to help working poor (Editorial)

Published: September 22, 2015

The just-released U.S. Census Bureau numbers show the nation's poverty level remains virtually unchanged at 14.8 percent, with nearly 47 million people living in poverty. As The Associated Press reports, this is the fourth straight year that the poverty rate has remained the same.

Although the troubling situation reveals the need to energize the economy, the nation's persistent poverty rate also highlights the importance of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit programs, which help the working poor.

The poverty level would be far higher without them.

Former Florida governor and presidential candidate Jeb Bush wants to double the Earned Income Tax Credit, and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, also running for president, would expand the Child Tax Credit.

The proposals offer an effective way to help the poor while encouraging work.

Regardless of who prevails in the presidential election, Congress at the very least should ensure these effective programs, scheduled to expire in 2017, are extended.

The Earned Income Tax Credit provides low-income workers a tax credit that increases as their incomes grow. It is refundable, so if the credit exceeds the worker's tax bill, the IRS will refund the balance. This provides a strong incentive for recipients to stay at work and increase their earnings.

The credit begins to phase out after it hits a certain level and the financial aid is no longer justified.

The Child Tax Credit offers a partially refundable tax credit to help families with the cost of caring for children. Low-income families can receive a credit of up to \$1,000 for each child under 17, reducing their tax bill.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the two programs in 2013 moved 9.4 million people out of poverty, including 5 million children.

The advocacy group RESULTS, which focuses on eradicating poverty, points out the households receiving the tax credits tend to spend them quickly with local businesses, generating \$1.50 to \$2 in economic activity for every \$1 of credit.

Investor Warren Buffet has said that increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit would do poor families far more good than raising the minimum wage.

And Republican Congressman Paul Ryan of Wisconsin agrees. He says, “The minimum wage makes it more expensive for employers to hire low-skilled workers, but the EITC, on the other hand, gives workers a boost — without hurting their prospects.

“It gives families flexibility — it helps them take ownership of their lives.”

Even in our bitterly partisan Congress, liberals and conservatives should be able to unite behind these sensible programs, which help families work their way out of poverty.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/bs-ed-recession-letter-20150922-story.html>

Baltimore Sun (MD): We can help people escape poverty

September 23, 2015

We can help people escape poverty — if Congress supports the EITC.

I appreciated reporter Natalie Sherman's article on the 2008 recession ("New Census survey data show continued effect of recession," Sept. 17).

Many Marylanders continue to struggle and feel the painful effects of the recession. What the article did not mention, however, is the great effectiveness of our anti-poverty programs.

In 2014, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children. Without these important pro-work tax credits, thousands more Marylanders would have fallen below the poverty line.

Yet critical improvements to these credits will expire soon, forcing over 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, into poverty or deeper into poverty.

Congress must put working families first. Maryland Sens. Barbara Mikulski and Ben. Cardin have co-sponsored bills that protect these credits, as have Reps. Elijah Cummings and John Sarbanes.

I urge Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger to join them in working to save the 2009 provisions of the EITC and CTC. These credits should be made permanent now, before it's too late and millions of working families suffer.

Sara Buckingham, Baltimore

<http://www.tampabay.com/opinion/letters/thursdays-letters-change-us-senates-filibuster-rules/2246812>

Tampa Bay Times (FL): Poverty in U.S. - Tax credits are key

September 23, 2015

I have lived in South Tampa in a relatively affluent neighborhood for more than 20 years. I had never seen the poverty in which many Floridian children live. Then I got a job tutoring low-income children and saw how poor some of my fellow Floridians are. Disturbed by my awakening I reported my finding to acquaintances. It is not difficult to skirt the more impoverished areas of Hillsborough County if one sticks close to Bayshore.

More children in Florida live in poverty today than during the Great Depression. One of every four children is in poverty, and these children often come from families in which one or more adults work one or more job. The latest U.S. Census data says that one in seven Americans lives below the poverty line.

What works to reduce poverty?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) have been praised by both Republicans and Democrats, and for good reason: In 2014, these tax credits moved 9.8 million people out of poverty in 2014 alone, including 5.2 million children. The tax credits promote work by allowing people to keep what they earn. Recipients use their refunds at businesses in their communities, paying for basic needs like groceries and car repairs so they have a reliable way to get to and from work.

Important improvements to these tax credits are set to expire in 2017. If Congress doesn't act in time, 50 million Americans, including 25 million children, will lose part or all of their credits. About 16 million people, including 8 million children, will slip into poverty or deeper into poverty. That includes some 1 million veteran and armed forces families and more than 2 million rural families.

The devastating effects of poverty must be eliminated. The existence of poverty exacts a heavy price from us all whether we are aware of it or not.

Susan Datz, Tampa

<http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/09/24/carson-forgets-american-history/72686516/>

Detroit Free Press (MI): We can't let down Americans struggling with poverty

September 24, 2015

New U.S. Census data for 2014 shows that 46 million Americans were living in poverty, including more than 15 million children. Yet, lawmakers in Congress seem more concerned about enacting new and costly tax breaks for business and the wealthy, rather than focusing on critical tax policies that help working Americans make ends meet.

Fortunately, the new Census data also gives us hope. It shows that in 2014, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children. The EITC and CTC are pro-work tax credits that have been shown to improve the health and well-being of children. Yet, critical improvements to these credits will expire soon, forcing millions of Americans into poverty or deeper into poverty.

Congress must put working families first. I urge our representatives and senators to work to save the 2009 provisions of the EITC and CTC. They should make them permanent now, before it's too late and millions of working families suffer.

Alexander King

Livonia

<http://www.tbo.com/list/news-opinion-letters/letters-to-the-editor-republic-or-theocracy-20150926/>

Tampa Tribune (FL): Help poor Americans

September 26, 2015

Thank you for your thoughtful editorial on "Smart ways to help the working poor" (Our Views, Sept 22).

How can our privileged nation tolerate such a high poverty rate? The Earned Income and Child Tax credits are possibly some of the easiest and wisest actions Congress can take to help poor Americans create better lives for themselves and their families.

I urge Sen. Marco Rubio to sign on to S. 1012, the Working Families Tax Relief Act, which Sen. Bill Nelson has already endorsed.

Similar legislation is pending in the House, and I hope our Tampa Bay area representatives will support it.

Linda Schatz

Tampa

<http://www.tbo.com/list/news-opinion-letters/letters-to-the-editor-in-jurors-we-trust-20150927/>

Tampa Tribune (FL): Rise up

September 27, 2015

Regarding "Smart ways to help working poor" (Our Views, Sept. 22):

As the Tribune editorial states, the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit support low- and moderate-income working households, which includes 134,000 veterans. The importance of the tax credit is evident: Florida is third in the nation, behind California and Texas, in the number of veterans who need and rely on the credits. If Congress does not act, half of those reliant will lose part or all of the tax credits.

Veterans have sacrificed their lives to defend and protect the freedoms we all hold so dearly. It is time for us to rise up and in turn protect the home of the brave. What better way to show our appreciation than to advocate for the House proposal to expand and strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit and the House bill that strengthens the Child Tax Credit.

Abeni Davies

Tampa

<http://www.tbo.com/list/news-opinion-letters/letters-to-the-editor-the-working-poor-and-minimum-wage-20150928/>

Tampa Tribune (FL): More must be done

September 28, 2015

Regarding "Smart ways to help working poor:" The Tampa Tribune is correct to say that the poverty rate would be higher without the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit (CTC); 16 percent of people in Florida live below the poverty line. In 2014, over 23 percent of children under 18 in related families in the state had incomes below the poverty line. In the next few months, Congress is expected to address "tax extenders," a collection of mostly business tax breaks that are extended regularly. Some have pressed to make certain of these business extenders permanent, perhaps as a part of the highway legislation.

It is critical that the EITC and CTC provisions are also made permanent, as failing to do so would put more Floridians at risk of falling into poverty.

Congress should also fix a gap in the EITC by expanding it for adults without children in the home. Many are noncustodial parents struggling to pay child support or young workers just starting out. They are eligible for only one-tenth the credit a family with two children receives. As a result, they are the only group the U.S. tax code taxes into (or deeper into) poverty.

Also, we need to extend the CTC to America's poorest families. Paradoxically, those families earning less than \$3,000 per year are excluded from the credit.

Let's help those who need it.

Jake Greenstein

Tampa

http://m.missoulia.com/news/opinion/columnists/real-help-for-working-families-in-real-danger/article_d5d99290-95b9-516b-a924-58dec438e944.html?mobile_touch=true

Missoula Missoulia (MT): Real Help for Working Families in Real Danger (Op-ed)

September 29, 2015

KAREN CUNNINGHAM

We're all aware of the rash of novels and movies that show life after national and global disasters: zombie wars, plagues, invasions by creatures from outer space or nasty artificial intelligence robots.

These are entertaining "what if" stories. But how would we feel if we awoke one morning to find that 9.8 million Americans had plunged into poverty while we slept? We'd find out these included people we liked: firefighters, home health aides, teacher aides, enlisted military men and women, veterans, retail workers, servers at our restaurants, janitors, many other low- or minimum-wage earners reduced to real, inarguable poverty, their dreams of home ownership, higher education, even car ownership, crushed.

We would feel that reality had gone terribly, dangerously wrong. And the scary thing is, it actually could happen. U.S. Census data released on Sept. 17 shows that 9.8 million Americans are kept above the poverty line because of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

The EITC is for workers who, after paying their taxes, find themselves in actual or near poverty.

It's a work incentive. It helps families make ends meet. It results in better futures for their children as the added income allows them to become healthier, more successful in school, able to earn more as adults. Further, the EITC put \$170 million back into Montana's local economies in 2012. Low-income and middle-class people spend most of what they have where they live.

The Child Tax Credit is structured in a similar way and has also proven to be an effective help to low income workers with children. Taxpaying families are required to earn a minimum income of \$3,000 to qualify for the partially refundable credit.

According to the U.S. census, Montana had a poverty rate of 15.4 percent in 2014. That translates into 153,954 Montanans, 40,619 of them children living in poverty. That's a bit better than in previous years thanks to improvements made to the EITC and CTC in 2009 that have gradually been making a positive difference. Those improvements came under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, an effective effort to save the American economy after the Great Recession hit, including keeping millions of Americans out of poverty or the worst depths of poverty.

The danger is that critical EITC and CTC provisions enacted as part of ARRA are set to expire in 2017. They must be saved. If not, over 50 million Americans would lose part or all of their EITC or CTC, pushing 16 million low- and modest-income Americans—half of them children—down or deeper into poverty.

This year, some key members of Congress have signaled they will try to make large business tax breaks permanent without offsetting the costs. It is crucial there not be a double standard against working families and individuals in favor of big business. Parity, another term for plain old-fashioned equality and fairness, must prevail. If Congress extends tax breaks for large corporations, it should certainly maintain the EITC and CTC provisions for hard-pressed working families. Such provisions should be made permanent now.

Not only should vital provisions under ARRA be made permanent, but there have been bipartisan proposals that would enhance both of these effective tax credits to lower the age of EITC eligibility from 25 to 21, to expand the EITC for single workers without children, and to create an inflation adjustment to the \$1,000 per child credit maximum for the CTC. These needed changes are all built on the bipartisan consensus that created the EITC in the first place under President Ford and led to its being strengthened under Presidents Reagan, Clinton and Obama. These credits work.

Most important, EITC and CTC provisions must be saved now, while Congress increases tax benefits to big business. As Congress debates other tax provisions we must speak up to remind Congress of the benefits that the EITC and CTC have for individuals, families, children and society as a whole.

Please contact: U.S. Sens. Jon Tester at (202) 224-2644 and Steve Daines at (202) 224-2651, and U.S. Rep. Ryan Zinke at (202) 225-3211. Urge them to work on behalf of hard-working Montanans to make the provisions of the EITC and CTC permanent now.

Providence Journal (RI): Help lift poor out of poverty (Op-ed)

Fatoumata Sangare

October 1, 2015

I was born in Mali and grew up in Senegal. I saw firsthand what it means to be poor. In low-income countries in Africa, people strive to live on less than \$1.25 a day, often without access to such necessities as food, shelter, education, health care, clean water and sanitation.

The populations of these countries often turn to faith. They pray throughout the day, hoping that an angel will come from somewhere very soon to put food on their table so that they can fill their stomachs that have been so empty for days.

My dad, a diplomat, provided financial support for my uncle and his young family, who lived in our hard-to-reach village. In the 1950s, my uncle was infected with onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness, and eventually went blind. He was no longer able to do farm work, to grow crops to feed his family.

There were some days when my uncle and his family were desperately looking for food. If my father hadn't been able to help provide it and other necessities, my uncle and his family might have died. They were lucky they had an angel who came to them — my father. However, this has not been the case for millions of people in Africa.

In contrast to Africa, the United States has programs designed to help individuals lift themselves out of poverty. If public funding and international aid were put into similar programs in my native country, my uncle's life probably would have turned out much better.

But America's poverty programs, however successful, only work if we maintain and strengthen them. Poverty is still of concern in this wealthy country. Despite claims by some politicians, cutbacks, neglect and political gridlock are more to blame for America's persistent poverty than the policies themselves.

On Sept. 16, the U.S Census Bureau released its annual poverty data for 2014. The poverty rate did not change between 2013 and 2014, remaining steady at 14.8 percent. This means that 46.7 million people, including 15.5 million children, lived in poverty in the United States last year. While it's good that poverty did not get worse, it's also disheartening that so many Americans still struggle, even as the economy improves.

Fortunately, there is some good news in the data. The supplemental poverty measure, which takes into account programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), shows that these programs and others have been effective in lifting people out of poverty. According to the measure, the EITC and Child Tax Credit (CTC)

lifted 9.8 million people out of poverty in 2014, including 5.2 million children. These pro-work tax credits help 2 million veteran and military households and 4.8 million rural households.

But key provisions of the EITC and CTC enacted in 2009 are set to expire in 2017. If this happens, 16 million people, including 8 million children, will fall, or fall more deeply, into poverty. Moreover, workers who don't claim dependent children for tax purposes are eligible for little or no EITC. Because of this small or nonexistent EITC, childless workers are actually taxed deeper into poverty.

I saw in Mali and Senegal families who could not afford a nutritious meal each day. Children in these families suffer from malnutrition, which stunts their growth and development. They perform poorly in school and even drop out, which puts their families deeper into poverty. Here in the United States, the EITC and CTC allow low-income families to buy enough food and provide well-balanced meals to their children. Thus, their children are much healthier and do better at school.

I urge Rep. David Cicilline, Sen. Jack Reed, and Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, all Rhode Island Democrats, to make protection of the EITC and CTC a priority this year and fix the glaring gap in the EITC by expanding it for low-income childless workers. Our goal should be to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Fatoumata Sangare, of Pawtucket, is a volunteer with RESULTS, a nonprofit organization that combats poverty. She holds a medical degree from the Mali Faculty of Medicine, and a master of science degree from George Washington University.

<http://bangordailynews.com/2015/10/02/opinion/letters/saturday-oct-3-2015-president-thibodeau-has-work-to-do-tax-credit-fall-short-rich-dont-care-about-us/>

Bangor Daily News (ME): Expand EITC eligibility

October 2, 2015

Expanding on a point Eloise Vitelli and Garrett Martin made in their [Sept. 7 BDN OpEd](#), it is imperative that Congress addresses the gaping hole in the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) that makes low-income adults without children, including noncustodial parents, the only workers taxed into — or deeper into — poverty. As a senior in college, this is an important issue for my peers and me as we work to establish ourselves after graduation.

In 2012, federal income and payroll taxes pushed 1.2 million childless workers into poverty and another 5.8 million deeper into poverty. Currently, childless workers under age 25 are ineligible for the tax credit. That makes it harder for those of us just starting out to make ends meet. There is bipartisan support for change, with President Barack Obama and Republican U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan proposing [to expand it to include childless workers and lower the eligibility age from 25 to 21](#).

If Congress fixes this gaping hole, 13.5 million childless workers nationwide, including 64,000 young adults in Maine, would become eligible for an the Earned Income Tax Credit or receive a larger a credit. The credit rewards and encourages work. Expanding the credit would boost employment and reduce poverty among childless workers, contributing to long-term financial security for recipients and a stronger economy overall. As Congress contemplates billions of dollars in tax breaks for businesses, hardworking, low-income young adults cannot be left behind.

Susan Fleurant

Waterville

http://m.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/my_view/reader-view-now-is-the-time-for-low-income-americans/article_327a75f8-ca44-566a-ac6c-d96aa8c5069b.html?mode=jqm

Santa Fe New Mexican (NM): Now is the time for low-income Americans to get their turn (Op-ed)

October 3, 2015

By Lydia Pendley

In June 2014, I wrote a My View for *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (“When do low-income Americans get their turn?” June 17). The issue addressed was Congress giving corporations permanent tax breaks while nothing was being done to preserve key provisions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit set to expire in 2017. More than 50 million Americans, including 25 million children, would stand to lose all or part of their tax credits. Sixteen million Americans would fall into poverty or deeper into poverty. Expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income childless workers who currently get little or nothing from it was also under discussion, but never happened.

It is now September 2015. Again, Congress is considering making business tax breaks permanent, costing hundreds of billion of dollars. Except about the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, we hear only silence. The same provisions of those credits are still set to expire, and low-income workers without children at home and young people just starting out continue to be taxed into poverty.

What do the Earned Income Tax and Child Tax credits mean for New Mexicans? Next to Social Security, the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit lift more people out of poverty than any other federal program — 10 million in 2014. In our state, 220,000 New Mexico households received the Earned Income Tax Credit, and 158,000 households received the low-income portion of the Child Tax Credit in 2012, including 20,000 veteran and military families. The Earned Income Tax Credit in New Mexico added about \$511 million to our economy that year.

The provisions that need to be made permanent by Congress ensure that very low-income families receive the Child Tax Credit, they boost the Earned Income Tax Credit for families with more than two children, and they reduce the “marriage penalty” for two-earner families getting the credit. If these provisions expire, 225,000 children in 124,000 New Mexico families will lose some or all of these pro-work tax credits, adding up to \$130 million lost. And 45,000 children and 94,000 New Mexicans overall will be pushed into or deeper into poverty.

In his recent speech to Congress, Pope Francis spoke about the need to address the cycle of poverty and bring hope to those who live in poverty. Bringing hope implies taking action to change the situation. Congress has a chance right now to do just that by taking positive action to make permanent important provisions of the tax credits and to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for childless workers. Please let Rep. Ben Ray Lujan and Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich know you expect them to work to make this happen and to make the needs of low-income New Mexicans and Americans a top legislative priority in the coming months.

Now is the time for low-income Americans to get their turn. I don’t want to have to write this again next year.

Lydia Pendley is co-group leader of Results-Santa Fe.

http://www.salina.com/opinion/letters/here-s-your-chance-to-help-the-poor/article_e7a2afd-de47-548e-b843-04e625860b09.html

Salina Journal (KS): Here's your chance to help the poor

Oct 4, 2015

In the romantic comedy, “While You Were Sleeping,” an actor wakes up to find he has missed out on what might have been. It was a lost opportunity. As citizens, we may not be sleeping, but we are distracted by the pressures and responsibilities of our personal lives. We are in danger of losing an opportunity.

It is uncomfortable to focus on the realities around us. According to newly released data from the U.S. Census Bureau that was reported recently in the Journal, nearly 47 million Americans are living in poverty. Of these, one in five children are not sure where their next meal is coming from.

The problem of hunger is complex and overwhelming. It is easy to be distracted and look away, missing opportunities to help. However, two successful, long-standing bipartisan programs that encourage and reward work do exist. The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit prevent more people from falling into poverty than any other programs in the country, except Social Security.

In 2009, in response to the Great Recession, effective improvements were made in these tax credits. Benefits were expanded to help low-income working families making as little as \$3,000 a year, families with more than two children, and married couples where both people work. As a result, the EITC and CTC lifted 9.8 million people out of poverty last year, including more than 5 million children.

But these improvements will expire if Congress does not act. Fortunately, we have an opportunity to prevent that from happening. We can call Sens. Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran, and Rep. Tim Huelskamp, all Kansas Republicans. Ask them to support legislation that makes permanent these important provisions to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. Our leaders need to hear from us, and it is our privilege to call.

— VIC and KAY STREUFERT, Lindsborg, retired

<http://flatheadbeacon.com/2015/10/10/we-can-protect-our-children/>

Flathead Beacon (MT): We Can Protect Our Children

As a retired social worker, I know the devastation that abuse causes

By Janice McCaffrey

October 10, 2015

Thank you for your in-depth article, “Falling Through the Cracks” (Sept. 23 Beacon). Child welfare is an important issue for all of us. I applaud Gov. Steve Bullock’s actions to increase services and create the Protect Montana Kids Commission. As a retired social worker, I know the devastation that abuse causes. I worked with families in high stress situations that all too frequently resulted in abuse. One major stress factor for families that we can alleviate is lack of resources, which can cause an inability to move upward on the social-economic ladder.

The U.S. Census report of Sept. 17 shows 153,954 Montanans, 40,619 children, live in poverty. The Census report goes on to say that 9.8 million Americans are kept above poverty through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).

Both are work-incentive tax credits with outcomes that include healthier children who are more successful in school and, therefore, are able to earn more in adulthood. The EITC and CTC also help local businesses. In 2012 alone the EITC put \$170 million back into Montana’s local economies.

These tax credits began under President Gerald Ford, were strengthened under Ronald Reagan, and continue because they improve the well-being of working families and their communities. However, they are due to expire in 2017 if Congress doesn’t act.

In your article, James Caringi is quoted, “CFSD is limited with what they can do. It has to be all of us.” I believe all of us can make a difference. I believe a better quality of life for families can prevent child abuse.

Please join me in contacting U.S. Sens. Jon Tester and Steve Daines, and Rep. Ryan Zinke. Petition them to fight for our children by keeping the EITC and CTC improvements permanent.

Janice McCaffrey
Columbia Falls

<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/news/article/William-Baker-Op-ed-Tax-credits-for-working-6561731.php>

Stamford Advocate (CT: William Baker Op-ed: Tax credits for working families endangered

Sunday, October 11, 2015

Joyce couldn't believe her eyes.

“That much?” she asked as she saw the refund on the tax return I had just prepared for her at the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) center. Most of us have savings we can draw on for pressing needs, such as unexpected bills or new clothes for the kids, but not those stuck in low-income jobs. Joyce saw the effect of her Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) and lit up like a light. Flushed with excitement, she said, “I can finally go to the doctor and fix my car.”

No surprise that EITC and CTC have lifted more people out of poverty than any other government program except **Social Security**. And yet some in Congress want to cut them by allowing improvements made during the Great Recession to expire. But the recession has not ended for many of us, and the credits are still needed.

The Census Data for 2014, released in September, show that the poverty rate was unchanged from 2013 at 14.8 percent. That translates to around 46.7 million Americans, including 15.5 million children, who lived in poverty last year. Locally, almost half of school children in Stamford qualify for free or reduced price school lunches; so do one in five in Greenwich. These are children of families with incomes of less than 130 percent of the poverty rate (\$31,525 for a family of 4). And there are other towns in Fairfield County with worse numbers — in Bridgeport it's none out of 10 children on lunch support.

While the recession is not over, there are bright spots. The Census Data show that EITC and CTC lifted 9.8 million people, including 5.2 million children, out of poverty in 2014. SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) lifted out another 4.7 million people. But, since the

overall poverty rate is unchanged, this suggests that the new jobs being created are low-paying, and the Safety Net is still needed.

The EITC and CTC have always had bipartisan support — EITC began during the **Ford Administration**. And now, even U.S. Rep. **Paul Ryan**, a “budget hawk,” has called for improving EITC for childless workers and non-custodial parents. Nevertheless, there is a movement in Congress to eliminate the 2009 improvements, a move that would push 16 million Americans, including 8 million children and a million veteran and armed forces families, into or deeper into poverty.

Those same Members of Congress want to make several business tax credits permanent, and they want to do it with no offsetting cuts — directly adding to the deficit. Even though the EITC and CTC improvements cost much less than those credits, they will only consider them if there are offsetting cuts to other anti-poverty programs, such as SNAP. In other words, these leaders will do all they can to take care of big business but working families have to fend for themselves. Does this sound right to you?

U.S. Rep. **Jim Himes** (D-CT-4) and senators **Chris Murphy** and **Richard Blumenthal** all support the EITC and CTC and recognize the importance of the improvements. Himes was recently quoted as saying that “the EITC is the greatest tool for ending economic inequality in this country.” Call their offices (or email through their websites) and tell them to push House and Senate leaders to save the EITC and CTC provisions before they expire. And thank them for supporting the less fortunate among us. Hard-working people such as Joyce are counting on our elected leaders to do what’s right. Let’s make sure they do.

William Baker of Stamford is a volunteer with Results, an international anti-poverty movement.

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20151012/OPINION/151009705/1132/opinion?p=3&tc=pg>

Spartanburg Herald-Journal: Tax credits are vital to poor families (Op-ed)

By Linda Bilanchone

Monday, October 12, 2015

The word “tax” has negative connotations for just about everybody, but add to it the word “credit,” and it becomes a little more appealing. And, probably the less money you make, the more interest you may have in income tax credits.

That is why some citizens' organizations are supporting the continuing availability of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). Both the League of Women Voters and RESULTS, a citizens' lobby dedicated to stopping hunger in this country and around the

globe, are urging members of Congress to support federal funding for these two tax credit programs, as are numerous others — faith leaders, charities, and civil rights groups.

The two tax code provisions that these groups are supporting are among our nation's strongest tools for helping working families escape poverty and achieve greater self-sufficiency.

The EITC and the CTC, put simply, support working families. These two components of the tax code are pro-work and pro-family.

In 2013, the EITC and the CTC lifted 8.8 million people out of poverty. These tax credits will expire soon unless Congress takes action to see that they continue. If they expire, 16 million people (including 8 million children) could fall deeper into poverty.

If key parts of the EITC are allowed to expire, a married couple with three children and earnings of \$35,000 will see their EITC shrink by about \$1,200. If key provisions of the CTC are allowed to expire, a single mother with two children who works full time at minimum wage, earning \$14,500, will lose her entire CTC of \$1,725.

And the EITC for adults without children in the home (which includes many non-custodial parents paying child support) is so low that these workers are actually taxed deeper into poverty.

Changes in both programs could boost employment and reduce poverty among these workers as well. Furthermore, some 450,000 veteran and armed forces families would lose all or part of the CTC or EITC if critical provisions of these programs are allowed to expire.

In South Carolina, 507,000 households received the EITC in 2012 and 364,000 households received the low-income part of the CTC in that same year. The EITC put about \$1.2 billion into South Carolina's economy in 2012.

Extensive research tells us that the EITC encourages work, especially in a strong labor market. During the 1990s, EITC expansion did more to raise employment among single mothers with children than either welfare reform or the strong economy.

In regard to long-term benefits, studies tell us that children whose families receive an income boost from these credits on average do better in school and are more likely to go to college, more likely to work more and earn more as adults, and more likely to be healthier.

In addition to supporting the EITC and the CTC, Congress has an opportunity to be proactive — to help low-income Americans save for the future. The Financial Security Credit (FSC) is a matched savings account that rewards low-income tax filers who save all or part of their tax refund!

The two bills that would address continuing to ensure the EITC and the CTC are H.R. 902 and H.R. 1286. If you agree that extending these programs is important, you can call the offices of House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (202-225-3031) and Ranking Member

Sander Levin (202-225-4961), urging them to protect and strengthen these programs and to support the Financial Security Credit (FSC) that would help families save for the future.

Let's use the positive effects of tax credits and matching savings funds to help workers help themselves.

Linda Powers Bilanchone is a past president of the League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County.

http://pubs.aarp.org/aarptm/20151011_PA/?pm=2&u1=coverleaf&pg=8#pg8

AARP Magazine (US): Letter to the editor

October/November 2015

Kudos to AARP and Viola Davis for reminding us about the hungry children in America. We can all do something about this by calling or writing our representatives and senators. There is no reason for this in the world's richest country. Check out results.org; ending hunger and poverty has been its goal for the past 35 years. Changes are possible, and you can help!

WILLIE DICKERSON
Snohomish, Washington

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/editorials/2015/10/13/congress-needs-new-priorities-in-tax-policy/73827356/>

Des Moines Register: Congress needs new priorities in tax policy (Editorial)

The Register's Editorial: October 14, 2015

The average CEO in Iowa earns about \$2.7 million, according to the AFL-CIO — 70 times more than the average worker and 185 times more than someone earning minimum wage. These individuals have accountants to file personal income taxes. They are eligible for many tax breaks. Any refund is likely saved or invested.

Then there are poor Iowans.

Many low-income people do not file tax returns. They may know they earn too little to owe income taxes or they don't have deductions for mortgage interest or college expenses. Perhaps they think the paperwork, time and cost are not worth it. Fortunately, these Iowans can receive free tax preparation assistance through programs sponsored by several nonprofit organizations in this state.

The United Way of Central Iowa, for example, helped 5,787 people in Polk, Dallas and Warren counties file a tax return in 2015. These Iowans received \$9 million in state and federal tax returns, or about \$1,500 per person. More than a third of the refund was the result of the Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable credit for low-income people designed to encourage and reward work.

Rather than investing this small nest egg in the stock market, these families use it for immediate necessities. They pay down debt, repair a furnace or buy clothing. They purchase goods and services from local businesses, which stimulates the economy. But all taxpayers, and the entire country, benefit from the EITC. The credit reduces reliance on public assistance, including welfare. Because it grows as people earn more money, they have an incentive to work more.

In 2013, the EITC lifted about 6.2 million people out of poverty and reduced the severity of poverty for an additional 21.6 million, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. When combined with the Child Tax Credit, up to \$1,000 to help offset the cost of raising children, even more families with children are lifted out of poverty. Yet key provisions in these tax credits are set to expire at the end of 2017, which could push 84,000 Iowans into or deeper into poverty.

Knowing all this, one would think preserving, and even expanding, these credits would be a top priority for Republican politicians. Notorious for their efforts to scale back public assistance or create barriers to receiving it, conservatives should be the greatest advocates for tax credits that encourage and reward work. Except they're not.

House Republicans have dedicated their tax reform energies toward helping the wealthy. Repeal the estate tax. Give a \$200,000 tax cut for millionaires. Expand and make permanent corporate tax breaks. These are the people and companies who create jobs, they say. You know, the old trickle-down economics theory we've all heard so much about.

The problem: There isn't much trickling down going on in the United States. Here, the top 20 percent of households hold nearly 90 percent of wealth, while the bottom 40 percent have nothing. Actually, they have less than nothing because they are in debt. The disparity of wealth, defined as all one's assets minus debts, is greater in this country than any other developed nation.

The rich don't need any more help from Washington.

<http://www.snoho.com/html/letters.html>

Snohomish Tribune (WA): Poverty assistance

October 13, 2015

To the Editor:

A letter to the editor ("Ask legislators to extend tax credit," Oct. 7 Tribunes) alerted me to your encouraging recent article ("Agencies convene to kick start anti-poverty effort," Sept. 30 Tribunes.)

Many of us are unaware of the silent struggles in our midst.

The Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and their families, is indeed a life-saver. The IRS tells us that 14.3 percent of Washington state tax filers claimed the EITC in a recent tax year. These tax recipients received an average EITC refund of \$2,145 in 2013. Most EITC recipients get the credit for two years or less, because it helps them get back on their feet.

From 1980 to 2012, the median U.S. household income grew 9 percent, while corporate profits grew 239 percent. Did you know that according to the Cato Institute that the annual cost to the average tax payer for corporate subsidies is \$870?

About 20 percent of U.S. kids live in poverty. Crucial, temporary improvements to the EITC are set to expire if Congress doesn't act.

Yes, we need tax reform, starting with strengthening the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Donna Munro
Bremerton

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2015/10/13/calling-all-candidates-whats-your-plan-hunger/73882974/>

Des Moines Register: Calling all candidates: What's your plan on hunger? (Article)

Mike Kilen, October 14, 2015

A new effort to make hunger and poverty issues a priority in the presidential campaign was launched Tuesday at the Iowa Hunger Summit in Des Moines.

Hunger and poverty issues haven't been a priority in any presidential administration since Lyndon Johnson's in the 1960s, said David Beckmann, president of Bread For the World, a Washington D.C. nonprofit group that advocates for policies that alleviate world hunger.

"How do we then make hunger and poverty a priority for our government? Beckmann asked. "The election is our opportunity. We had to come here to Iowa. We had to come to you."

A coalition of individuals, anti-poverty and faith-based organizations launched Vote To End Hunger with a call to voters to question presidential candidates on what they will do in office to end hunger by 2030. In the U.S., 48 million people live in food insecure homes, including 15 million children. One in 3 people in the world are malnourished.

Iowa, home to this week's World Food Prize, is a leading agricultural state and the first to have a voice in the nominating process with the Iowa Caucus.

He said Bread For the World's polling shows two-thirds of Americans say that hunger and poverty should be a top priority. He also claims that his organization has calculated that programs to end hunger can save \$150 billion, mainly in reduced health care costs.

Bread For the World advocates for congressional bills on child nutrition and global food security and for tax breaks for working families and other issues. But the Vote To End Hunger campaign doesn't take specific positions; its goal is to find out which candidates have a solid plan.

"There are different ways to skin a cat," Beckmann said afterward.

His organization has joined 100 other Christian leaders in asking presidential candidates what they would do to help the world's poor and posted their responses atcircleofprotection.us/candidate-videos/

Bishop Richard Pates of the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines told the gathering at Marriott Hotel that many faith traditions, including Christian, Islam and Judaism, have beliefs that it is a moral imperative to feed the hungry.

Yet in a recent meeting with Polk County Supervisors, he was told that one in five are suffering from hunger right here in Polk County.

“It is a scandal,” he said.

Pates said citizens should ask government officials to hold the high ideals and morals of its citizens and act on the issues of poverty, including a living wage for families.

Jamy Rentschler of Ames stood before the group as a personal example of what it can mean. She grew up in a family with a single mother who received food assistance.

“The average (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefit is \$1.41 per person, per meal. Without that support, I wouldn’t have gone to college and got two bachelor’s degrees and a master’s degree,” said Rentschler, who volunteers for RESULTS, a nonprofit which advocates for policies to end hunger.

The effort locally will include a Vote To End Hunger rally at 2 p.m. Nov. 8 at Grand View University.

WORLD FOOD PRIZE

- The award will be presented to Sir Fazle Hasan Abed of Bangladesh in a ceremony at the Iowa Capitol, beginning at 7 p.m. Thursday. The Laureate Award Ceremony will be broadcast live on Iowa Public Television. Abed is founder of BRAC, formerly known as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, now the world’s largest nongovernmental development organization. It’s credited with helping 150 million people worldwide improve their lives. The award comes with a \$250,000 prize.

- For more information about Iowa Hunger Summit and World Food Prize activities, go to www.worldfoodprize.org.

<https://www.adn.com/article/20151016/readers-write-letters-editor-oct-16-2015>

Alaska Dispatch News (AK): Earned income, child tax credits vital for Alaskans

October 16, 2015

An Oct. 10 ADN article about the potentially beneficial health impacts of the PFD mentioned another important economic boost for Alaskans, the earned income tax credit. The EITC is a pro-work tax credit for low- and moderate-income workers, which encourages work and reduces poverty. Annually, the EITC and the child tax credit lift 14,000 Alaskans, including 7,000 children, out of poverty. However, in 2017, key provisions of the EITC and child tax credit are set to expire, which would cause 41,000 children in 22,000 Alaska families to lose some or all of

their working family tax credits. In 2012, the EITC put \$102 million into the Alaska economy, boosting financial security for recipients and creating a stronger economy overall. Congressional inaction would allow 31,000 Alaskans to fall into, or deeper into, poverty. As Alaskans who appreciate the economic boost of the PFD, we must ask our members of Congress to protect the earned income tax credit and child tax credit, which serve as vital supports for thousands of hardworking Alaska families.

Susan Fleurant
Chugiak

http://iowacitypresscitizen.ia.newsmemory.com/?token=a3ba10607d294cedd71ab2728be1ca5e&cnum=2900014&fod=111111STD&selDate=20151019&licenseType=paid_subscriber

Iowa City Press-Citizen: Congress needs new priorities in tax policy (Reprinted Editorial from Des Moines Register)

October 16, 2015

The average CEO in Iowa earns about \$2.7 million, according to the AFL-CIO — 70 times more than the average worker and 185 times more than someone earning minimum wage. These individuals have accountants to file personal income taxes. They are eligible for many tax breaks. Any refund is likely saved or invested.

Then there are poor Iowans.

Many low-income people do not file tax returns. They may know they earn too little to owe income taxes or they don't have deductions for mortgage interest or college expenses. Perhaps they think the paperwork, time and cost are not worth it. Fortunately, these Iowans can receive free tax preparation assistance through programs sponsored by several nonprofit organizations in this state.

The United Way of Central Iowa, for example, helped 5,787 people in Polk, Dallas and Warren counties file a tax return in 2015. These Iowans received \$9 million in state and federal tax returns, or about \$1,500 per person. More than a third of the refund was the result of the Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable credit for low-income people designed to encourage and reward work.

Rather than investing this small nest egg in the stock market, these families use it for immediate necessities. They pay down debt, repair a furnace or buy clothing. They purchase goods and services from local businesses, which stimulates the economy. But all taxpayers, and the entire country, benefit from the EITC. The credit reduces reliance on public assistance, including welfare. Because it grows as people earn more money, they have an incentive to work more.

In 2013, the EITC lifted about 6.2 million people out of poverty and reduced the severity of poverty for an additional 21.6 million, according to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. When combined with the Child Tax Credit, up to \$1,000 to help offset the cost of raising children, even more families with children are lifted out of poverty. Yet key provisions in these tax credits are set to expire at the end of 2017, which could push 84,000 Iowans into or deeper into poverty.

Knowing all this, one would think preserving, and even expanding, these credits would be a top priority for Republican politicians. Notorious for their efforts to scale back public assistance or create barriers to receiving it, conservatives should be the greatest advocates for tax credits that encourage and reward work. Except they're not.

House Republicans have dedicated their tax reform energies toward helping the wealthy. Repeal the estate tax. Give a \$200,000 tax cut for millionaires. Expand and make permanent corporate tax breaks. These are the people and companies who create jobs, they say. You know, the old trickle-down economics theory we've all heard so much about.

The problem: There isn't much trickling down going on in the United States. Here, the top 20 percent of households hold nearly 90 percent of wealth, while the bottom 40 percent have nothing. Actually, they have less than nothing because they are in debt. The disparity of wealth, defined as all one's assets minus debts, is greater in this country than any other developed nation.

The rich don't need any more help from Washington.

http://www.knoxnews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/letter-make-credit-permanent_50429202

Knoxville News Sentinel (TN): Make credit permanent

October 18, 2015

Twenty-six percent of children in Tennessee live in poverty. The Earned Income Tax Credit is a refundable income tax credit for low-income workers and their families. The EITC generates at least \$1.50 in local economic activity for every dollar claimed. This tax credit also facilitates economic mobility such that most recipients claim the credit for no more than two years.

However, critical improvements to the EITC are set to expire if Congress doesn't act. If this happens, 16 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into or deeper into poverty.

I am a RESULTS (results.org) volunteer working to improve the health and well-being of all U.S. citizens. Please let U.S. Sens. Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker and U.S. Rep. John J. Duncan Jr. know that critical improvements to the EITC need to be made permanent in any new tax legislation.

Donna Schindler Munro, Bremerton, Wash.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865639339/Letter-Expiring-provisions.html?pg=all#pBR5bubbB8IAHT8g.03>

Deseret News (UT): Expiring provisions

October 19, 2015

Congress needs to take action to save three expiring provisions of the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) and CTC (Child Tax Credit). The three key tax provisions, put in place in 2009 to help working families, are set to expire in 2017.

1. The “Marriage Penalty” relief will disappear from the EITC, resulting in higher taxes and reduced refunds for married couples. 2. Families with more than two children will see tax increases or reduced EITC credits. 3. The income threshold for CTC will jump from \$3,000 to \$14,700, resulting in many low-income working parents losing valuable credits.

These credits have been praised by Republicans and Democrats alike, keeping 9.8 million people out of poverty in 2014 alone. Without the support of Congress, it is estimated 16 million families will slip into poverty or deeper into poverty.

I urge our legislators (local and national) to step up and take action. I would like to remind them and everyone: These are hard-working families. They are not loafers looking for a free ride.

Michael Brown

Salt Lake City

<http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article40342443.html>

Miami Herald (FL): Hungry children

October 19, 2015

I’m outraged that some in Congress continue their assault on our neighbors struggling with poverty. Fortunately, for families in our community and across the United States, Congress passed a final budget blueprint that doesn’t put cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on a fast track. But we need to remind lawmakers how important this program is. Child Nutrition Reauthorization is an opportunity for Congress to protect and strengthen child nutrition programs without cutting SNAP.

Do lawmakers forget that the primary beneficiaries of SNAP are children, the elderly and the disabled? Do they ignore that SNAP and child-nutrition programs have been shown to improve nutrition and health outcomes in children?

When it comes to reducing hunger and poverty, our investments in SNAP and child nutrition programs are helping millions of families access nutritious food, as one in five American children is at risk of hunger.

I urge our members of Congress to stand up for hungry children and families and reject any proposals to cut or restructure child nutrition programs and SNAP.

ESTHER GARVETT, MIAMI

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/10/20/earned-income-child-tax-credits-key-families/74004194/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Earned Income, Child Tax credits are key for families

October 20, 2015

Thank you to The Des Moines Register editorial board for highlighting the importance of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit [Congress needs new priorities in tax policy, Oct. 14]. Quite simply, there are no other programs on the books that lift more working people and children out of poverty than the EITC and CTC. According to the U.S. census, in 2014 these credits lifted 9.8 million people out of poverty, including 5.2 million children.

Studies show that children in EITC/CTC households grow up healthier, do better in school and earn more income as adults. Yet even with those outcomes, leaders in Congress are oblivious. Many lawmakers (and presidential candidates) oppose a minimum wage increase and have no plan to increase income except for those at the top. This means that the EITC and CTC are the last refuge for working families trying to make ends meet. But, as the Register pointed out, if key provisions of the EITC and CTC are allowed to expire, 16 million people — half of them children — will fall into or deeper into poverty. That's not progress; that's punishment. Sens. Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst and Rep. David Young must do the right thing for Iowa's working families — save the EITC and CTC provisions now, before it's too late.

Jos G. Linn, grassroots manager, U.S. Poverty Campaigns, RESULTS, West Des Moines

<http://www.abqjournal.com/662488/opinion/talk-of-the-town-194.html>

Albuquerque Journal (NM): Tax policies benefit working families

October 20, 2015

A BIG “thank you” to Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Rep. Ben Ray Luján for signing onto H.R. 1286 and 902 and to Senators (Martin) Heinrich and (Tom) Udall for signing onto S1012 .

These bills are designed to strengthen and make permanent the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit so that work is not only encouraged but rewarded! Both federal and state tax policies offer incentives to businesses and yet when incentives in tax policy are discussed regarding families, we hear words like “handouts” thrown around.

As Washington discusses tax policy, we also often hear that businesses need stability. Anytime we hear folks discussing the importance of this needed stability for businesses, I would encourage you to throw into these conversations that working families need stability, too! We never know if we will get a raise, whether we will have a job next week, how much our rent or insurance will go up, whether we might suffer a serious illness or maybe experience a surprise pregnancy! The EITC, CTC and SNAP offer a cushion to working families when our economy and life throws our family into unstable situations.

So all of us at RESULTS ABQ send a giant “thank you” to our folks in D.C. that have lent their voice, power and position to support tax policies that prioritize working families.

DEE IVY

Albuquerque

<http://www.thecalifornian.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/10/20/oct-vote-ish-nix-canine-sports-center/74275724/>

The Californian (CA): Bolster pro-work tax credits

October 21, 2015

New U.S. Census data shows in 2014, one in seven (46 million!) Americans were living in poverty, including more than one in five children. Yet, lawmakers in Congress seem more concerned about enacting new and costly tax breaks for business and the wealthy, rather than focusing on saving critical tax policies that help working Americans make ends meet.

Fortunately, the new Census data also gives us hope. It shows that in 2014, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children. The EITC and CTC are pro-work tax credits that have been shown to improve the health and well-being of children. Yet, critical improvements to these

credits will expire soon, forcing over 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, into poverty or deeper into poverty.

Congress must put working families first. I urge our representatives and senators to work to save the expiring provisions of the EITC and CTC. They should make them permanent now, before it's too late and millions of working families suffer.

Ashley Perez

Santa Cruz

<http://www.press-citizen.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/10/22/consider-making-tax-credits-permanent/74403822/>

Iowa City Press Citizen (IA): Consider making tax credits permanent

October 23, 2015

Priorities in tax policy need to support the working poor.

The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit are set to expire in 2017.

These two benefits are what are pulling the working poor out of poverty. In 2014, the EITC and CTC moved 9.8 million people above the poverty line, according to recent census numbers.

The EITC rewards individuals and families for working. This credit is also one of the most effective tools at reducing poverty.

Low-income workers put \$1.50 to \$2 back into the economy for every credit earned. In 2012, the EITC put \$452 million back into the Iowa economy.

So please, Rep. Lobeski, Senators Ernst and Grassley, consider making these credits permanent.

Laura Lage
North Liberty

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865639788/Families-in-poverty.html?pg=all>

Deseret News (UT): Families in poverty

October 24, 2015

I would like to echo Michael Brown's recent letter ("Expiring provisions," Oct. 19) about making permanent the three Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) provisions.

The three provisions, set to expire in 2017, were created to help those deepest in poverty by offsetting payroll taxes, with credit amount based on earned income, marital status and family size. The provisions were put in place in 2009 after the recession to reach those working families with the most need and the lowest income.

In 2009, 6.6 million people were lifted out of poverty. In Utah alone we had 288,000 children in 2015 benefiting from the 2009 EITC and CTC improvements. If we fail to make these expanded provisions permanent, we will see more Utah families, including thousands of children, fall deeper into poverty.

As someone who works to reduce the effects of poverty on children and families in Utah every day, in good conscience I must support the largest poverty reduction program in the U.S. Members of Congress should know that we support bringing families out of poverty by making permanent the EITC and CTC provisions.

Meredith Muller
Salt Lake City

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/letters/article/Friday-letters-Kevin-Brady-fallen-pastors-6599512.php>

Houston Chronicle (TX): Firm up safety net

October 30, 2015

Regarding "Congressman eyes Ways and Means chair" (Page B1, Tuesday), while [Kevin Brady](#) works to drive through tax reform legislation, low-income working American families cannot be disregarded. If Brady becomes [House Ways and Means Committee](#) chairman, his admirable ability to get along with [Democrats](#) and craft bipartisan legislation must be carried over to his new role.

New House Ways and Means leadership must bring strength, unity and improved tax policy. Failing to consider all American families will only further damage our current safety net programs.

Cacie Waters, Magnolia

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/economy-budget/259011-congress-must-act-now-to-save-pro-work-tax-provisions>

The Hill (DC): Congress must act now to save pro-work tax provisions

November 04, 2015

By Maxine Thomas

Spending time with family and friends, laughing around the table, and volunteering to serve the people who are hungry at my church — all of these moments bring me a sense of joy. Just as I excitedly await the holiday season, there is another time of year that I look forward to: tax time. Tax season has become like another celebration for my family because of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC).

I work full time, but I still find myself in the rut of not being able to afford the costs of everyday life. As the saying goes, I have to rob Peter to pay Paul. It is my reality. How do I decide which bill to prioritize when they are all important? A roof over our heads, electricity, heat, and water — these are all essential.

Throughout the year, I've learned to make payment arrangements to prevent my utilities from being disconnected. I've learned how to stretch a dollar bill by counting out 100 pennies so that I never forget the importance of every single cent. It's not easy, but the EITC and CTC provide us with the crucial support we need to get by. Every penny counts.

The EITC and CTC lifted 9.8 million hardworking Americans out of poverty in 2014 alone. These tax credits help so many people make ends meet, but important improvements are due to expire in 2017. If Congress does nothing, 50 million people will lose part or all of their tax credits. About 16 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty. If Congress does not act to make these provisions permanent, it will have an impact on families like mine.

Every year at tax time, my husband and I can catch up on paying bills and feel free from those worries when we take our kids to the mall and let them choose a new pair of shoes. I'm able to breathe a deep sigh of relief knowing that I can finally replace worn-out clothing and make sure they have what they need. There is nothing quite like watching the joy on my kids' faces as they run and play in a new pair of shoes they were able to pick out themselves. It's a wonderful feeling for all of us.

I spend my tax refund on making sure my kids have the things they need, and in turn, the local businesses where I live in Indianapolis benefit. Studies show that my children will do better in school and earn more when they are adults because they've benefitted from the EITC and CTC.

I work so hard to give my children the best I possibly can — everyone does. If Congress can offer tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, they can also make sure that working moms

like me don't have to choose between turning on the heat this winter and paying the rent. Congress should act quickly to extend — or better yet, make permanent — these crucial provisions to the EITC and CTC that help me and millions of other families stay above the poverty line.

Thomas lives in Indianapolis where she is a volunteer with RESULTS. She is a mother of five and a member of the RESULTS "Experts on Poverty" program, a group of volunteers who speak with legislators about their firsthand experiences with poverty.

http://www.idahopress.com/members/don-t-forget-needy-kids-this-winter/article_15dc0d56-d9f1-564b-a707-50e120f4fd33.html

Idaho Press (ID): Don't forget needy kids this winter

Nov 5, 2015

To whom it may concern: With the holiday season upon us once again, we are reminded of the children all across the Treasure Valley and throughout Idaho who go without, not only during this season of caring and giving, but also throughout the year.

These kids rely on programs many see as handouts just to survive, and their families rely on certain tax refunds in order to give their little ones any holiday at all.

Don't let the children of Idaho go without Christmas this year. Contact our representatives and senators and demand they make permanent these provisions (the earned income tax credit, child tax credit and protections for SNAP) that make the simple things happen for hundreds of thousands of children across Idaho, ensure our elected officials protect the most fragile amongst us.

— Annamarie Morehead, Melba

Las Cruces Sun-News (NM): Earned Income Tax Credit Helps Low-Wage Workers

November 6, 2015

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Friday, November 6, 2015

75 CENTS

Your opinions

Earned Income Tax Credit helps low-wage workers

Your Oct. 23 story, "Ryan to run for House speaker," notes "House GOP (is given) a chance to chart a new course after years of chaos." This may also offer opportunity for struggling New Mexicans. Recall every week in our state, 40,000 people need food assistance, and 30 percent of our children live in poverty.

One of the most powerful anti-poverty programs in America is the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is a pro-work federal tax credit for folks working low-wage jobs. Established in 1975 so low-income families are not subject to unfair tax policy and can be rewarded for increasing their earning power. Bipartisan support over the years has allowed this effective program to reach more families, with the result that in 2013, 6.2 million Americans, including 3.2 million children, were lifted out of poverty, and the severity of poverty was reduced for another 21.6 million people.

However, some provisions of the EITC will expire in 2017, and if they are allowed to do so, more than 50 million Americans, including 25 million children and 1 million veteran and armed forces families, will lose part or all of their tax credits. As a result, 16 million, including 8 million children, will fall into or fall deeper into poverty. We can do better.

Rep. Paul Ryan, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, has expressed support for the EITC, including expansion to cover workers without children in their homes, and

lowering eligibility from 25 to 21 years. As Congress considers tax reform and extending some business credits, let's support hardworking families by keeping key provisions of the EITC intact, and fix the gap in EITC for workers without children and younger workers.

Urge Rep. Steve Pearce to help in this effort and to show his own support for American workers.

Rich Renner
Las Cruces

Chambersburg Public Opinion (PA): Wage stagnation hurts families here; government can help (Op-ed)

November 8, 2015

POVERTY

Wage stagnation hurts families here; government can help

By Bruce Kessler

Sometimes our congressional leaders appear to be largely unaware of poverty in their districts. I am not saying that they are unconcerned, but that it's not a high priority. Instead around here it seems to be the business leaders who are more conscious of local realities, as when the head of the Franklin County Area Development Corp., Mike Ross, reminded us that many Franklin County families are struggling. Our area is typical of the USA. Key poverty-fighting provisions in U.S. tax policy are set to expire and midstate congressmen should make them permanent.

Here's the problem. Americans' real income (income after adjusting for inflation) hit its peak in 1979. For many, what they can afford now is considerably less than what a similar family could buy then. Since the official end of the recession in 2009, real wages have declined. Even where unemployment is low, it is not surprising that struggle is part of life. If you compare today to 2007, the last year before the recession, workers in all but the top fifth of incomes have seen their purchasing power decline. For example, food prep workers (already near the bottom of the wage scale) have lost 9% since 2009. Economic productivity has climbed steadily, creating the potential for rising incomes. However, real income for the overwhelming majority of workers has fallen. That explains the persistence of poverty.

For the last 30-plus years, families have dealt with stagnating wages by working more hours and by getting an income boost from the Earned Income Tax Credit and (since 1997) the Child Tax Credit. As low-wage workers' hours increase, they qualify for a larger tax credit. Childless workers hardly get any benefit, but families with children find these credits abso-

lutely vital to softening the effects of wage stagnation. Here are the current statistics from the Census Bureau: These tax credits moved 9.8 million people out of poverty in 2014 alone, including 5.2 million children.

Some say the tax code should not be used for this. But keep in mind that these programs are very effective incentives to work more, a concept enjoying bipartisan support for decades. Besides, there are literally hundreds of other incentives built into the tax code, from encouraging farmers to buy equipment, to encouraging investors to buy stocks, to rewarding many individuals for donating to charities. Those are legitimate objectives. Work is, too.

However, important improvements to the EITC and CTC made in 2009 will soon expire. In the former, larger families qualified for a bigger credit and the marriage penalty (when two low-income workers get married they jointly qualify for a considerably smaller credit, or none at all) was addressed. For the Child Tax Credit, Congress lowered the threshold at which very low-income families could qualify for part of the credit. These don't sound that major, but their expiration will hammer working families: 50 million Americans, including 25 million children, will lose part or all of their EITC or CTC. About 16 million people, including 8 million children, will slip into poverty or deeper into poverty. That includes some 1 million veteran and armed forces families and more than 2 million rural families. A single mother with two children working full time in a nursing home for the federal minimum wage and earning \$14,500 would lose her entire CTC of \$1,725 if the CTC provision expires — about one and a half months' income for her.

We have these necessary policies in part because of wage stagnation. When incomes begin to rise, families will be able to

for the EITC and participation will drop, which makes obvious sense. What doesn't make sense is threatening millions of families with falling into poverty, even as they work just as hard.

Recently the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee passed bills making various business tax breaks, which had been temporary, into permanent provisions in the tax code. Corporate lobbyists argue that businesses need the certainty of permanence. The committee pointedly left out the key EITC and CTC provisions. I think many members of Congress like Bill Shuster (who represents Chambersburg) and Lou Barletta (Shippensburg) are unaware of the income stagnation problem and of the looming smack down that millions of families will experience when those provisions expire. At Rep. Barletta's town hall in Shippensburg, I asked about his position on the expiring provisions. In his answer he changed the focus to how important education is for each person's future. Who could disagree with that. But children growing up in poverty shoulder a very heavy burden for the rest of their lives, simply because of birth. A few overcome it, but growing up in those circumstances is an incredible waste of human potential for our country. Probably, he dodged the specific question because he isn't often asked to address it. It is not a priority.

Public Opinion readers live in both these representatives' districts. Neither member will make the expiring provisions in the EITC and the CTC a priority unless they hear from us. In the Senate, Bob Casey has sponsored bills to preserve them, but Sen. Toomey has not. They all should support making the 2009 improvements permanent.

Bruce Kessler is a volunteer in RESULTS, a grass roots citizens group that encourages Congress

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/issues/2015/11/08/group-wants-candidates-make-ending-hunger-priority/75426344/>

Des Moines Register (IA): Group wants candidates to make ending hunger a priority (Article)

Kim Norvell, knorvell@dmreg.com

November 9, 2015

Poverty and hunger reaches homes and families across the nation, and one group is working to get presidential candidates to make these issues a priority.

Vote to End Hunger is a coalition of organizations who are using the political process to help elect a president who will act to end hunger by 2030. Nearly 200 people gathered at a rally Sunday at Grand View University to discuss how they can use Iowa's unique position in the election process to mobilize candidates on the issue.

They saw video clips from nine leading presidential candidates on their plans to end poverty and hunger. They also heard from state Rep. Mark Smith, D-Marshalltown, and state Sen. Brad Zaun, R-Urbandale, on their experience working to end hunger locally.

"To have people who are hungry among us is simply unconscionable," Smith said. "To have this much bounty around us and to have that much hunger is simply wrong."

In Iowa, 12.6 percent of the state's population are food insecure, which equals 389,000 Iowans. Jean Rolfe of Dubuque is one of them.

After 18 years of marriage, Rolfe's husband left her and their four sons without the help of child support. Her family was homeless and hungry.

Like many others, Rolfe said she relied on the food pantry in Dubuque but at times was still forced to split one chicken breast between five people. She said they are doing better, but her family still struggles with hunger.

"If it wasn't for the food pantries in Dubuque it would have been very, very difficult for me and my kids," she said during an emotional speech. "I see so many people out there and I know a lot of people who are hungry."

Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, speaks at the Vote to End Hunger rally Sunday at Grand View University. (Photo: Kim Norvell/Des Moines Register)

Speakers encouraged attendees to lobby their local and state lawmakers as well as get in front of presidential candidates when they are in Iowa and ask: “If elected, what will you do to end hunger, alleviate poverty, and create opportunity in the U.S. and worldwide?”

“Iowans right now have an exceptional opportunity to speak up in a way that could change the direction of our nation and the world,” said the Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. He added a president or Congress has not made hunger and poverty a top priority since the 1970s. “You’ve got tremendous access and a heart for people in need. You’ve got to use it.”

To learn more about the movement or view presidential candidate videos, visit www.votetoendhunger.org.

‘Advocacy does make a difference’

- Talk to members of Congress, presidential candidates and local elected officials at town halls, candidate forums, debates and face-to-face meetings.
- Prepare what you will ask them ahead of time. Introduce yourself, preface the question with a statistic, identify a problem they can address, inform them about a solution to the problem or share a personal story, and make a targeted request in the form of a question.
- Sit near the front or near a microphone. Be "first, fast, high" when raising your hand to ask a question. Hold onto the microphone so you can ask follow-up questions.
- Talk to campaign staffers. Have a one- or two-page FAQ ready to leave with them.
- Follow up after the event and hold them accountable.

— Josh Linn, grassroots manager for RESULTS, an organization that fights poverty.

http://www.kitsapsun.com/opinion/letters-tax-policy-can-aid-poverty-efforts_12315819

Kitsap Sun (WA): Tax policy can aid poverty efforts

Thank you for your coverage of the Coats for Kids Distribution at View Ridge Elementary School last Wednesday. As a special-education teacher I was fortunate to witness two of my second-grade students faces light up when they saw the firetrucks and received a warm winter compliments of our local firefighters and Rotary clubs. At this time of Thanksgiving, it truly was a feather in my paper turkey gratitude list.

Many families at View Ridge are a reflection of the 1 in 7 Americans today who struggle to put food on the table not just at Thanksgiving, but all year long. Local efforts like those last Wednesday help, and thankfully our tax system can too. Pro-work tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are a critical boost — in 2014 alone, these tax credits lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children.

When Congress returns from Thanksgiving, Congressional leaders are pushing to make certain business tax breaks permanent. Meanwhile, critical EITC and CTC provisions are set to expire

soon — if this happens, 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, could be forced into or deeper into poverty. Any legislative agreement that makes business tax breaks permanent also must permanently extend the EITC and CTC provisions.

During this holiday season, our members of Congress, Rep. Derek Kilmer and Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell should put working families first. I urge our them to save the expiring EITC and CTC provisions, before it's too late.

Diana Eddy, Hansville

http://www.nj.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/11/unlike_trump_or_christie_decent_americans_welcome.html

Newark Star-Ledger (NJ): Congress should remember the needy this Thanksgiving

November 25, 2015

During Thanksgiving, we all take stock of what we're thankful for and look forward to a holiday season filled with family and friends. But, today, 1-in-7 Americans struggle to put food on the table not just at Thanksgiving, but all year long. Fortunately, pro-work tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are a critical boost – in 2014 alone, these tax credits lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children.

When Congress returns from Thanksgiving break, Congressional leaders are pushing to make certain business tax breaks permanent. Meanwhile, critical EITC and CTC provisions in place since 2009 are set to expire by the conclusion of 2017. If this happens, 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, could be forced into or deeper into poverty. Any legislative agreement that makes business tax breaks permanent also must permanently extend the EITC and CTC provisions.

During this holiday season, Congress should put working families first. I urge New Jersey's Congressional representatives and Senators to save the expiring EITC and CTC provisions before it's too late.

Susan Joseph Rack

Martinsville

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/11/25/holiday-season-congress-should-put-families-first/76317518/>

Des Moines Register (IA): This holiday season, Congress should put families first

November 25, 2015

Once again during the week of Thanksgiving I find myself writing a letter urging the Iowa congressional delegation to vote to save essential provisions in the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. I also ask that the Earned Income Tax Credit be expanded to those without children. With less than two weeks until Congress reaches a final deal on tax legislation, we must ensure that Congress doesn't put business tax breaks ahead of working families as they finalize said deal.

This voter, along with many others, I'm sure, is able to hold the many events happening locally, regionally, nationally and internationally within sight without having to drop one in order to address another. As you interact with those who work in restaurants and retail remember they have families they are trying to support working 50 or more hours a week, if not at one job, then most likely two or more. Let them have something to be thankful for.

Please call or write your senators and representative to urge parity when making any business tax breaks permanent by making permanent the essential provisions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.

— *Stephen Blobaum, Results volunteer, West Des Moines*

http://www.idahopress.com/members/don-t-let-kids-go-without-for-holidays/article_96a9fcb5-33d1-5261-bc43-d6bed60a6c4c.html

Idaho Press (ID): Don't let kids go without for holidays

November 25, 2015

The season of giving draws ever closer, and while we donate our turkeys and volunteer our time, there are still children who fall into the gap.

Here in Idaho, hundreds of thousands of children are at risk of falling below or deeper into poverty this holiday season. Take a moment from your busy schedule of good cheer to contact your representatives and senators about expanding and protecting these children who are most vulnerable amongst us. Tell them to protect SNAP for children so that their families may yet celebrate Thanksgiving, tell them to expand and protect the EITC and CTC so that these children may yet have a Christmas this year.

Don't let Idaho's children go without this holiday season. Help make sure they have access to the hand-ups that allow them to have the joy of Christmas just the same as your children.

Annamarie Morehead, Melba

<http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/readers/2015/11/25/tax-credits-working-poor/76342538/>

Detroit Free Press (MI): On Thanksgiving, don't let Congress forget working poor

November 26, 2015

During Thanksgiving, many of us take stock of what we're thankful for and look forward to a holiday season filled with family and friends. But one in seven Americans today struggles to put food on the table, not just at Thanksgiving, but all year long. Fortunately, tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are a critical boost. In 2014 alone, these tax credits lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children. When Congress returns from Thanksgiving break, some leaders are pushing to make certain business tax breaks permanent. Meanwhile, critical EITC and CTC provisions are set to expire soon. If this happens, 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, could be forced into or deeper into poverty. Any legislative agreement that makes business tax breaks permanent also must permanently extend the EITC and CTC. I urge our representatives and senators to save the expiring EITC and CTC provisions, before it's too late.

Sylvia Lewis, Rochester

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/article/Reward-for-work-6657838.php>

Houston Chronicle: Reward for work (Editorial)

Tax credit programs for low-income parents deserve a permanent place in the law.

November 27, 2015

Today, Black Friday, more than 100 million shoppers brush off those turkey-induced tryptophan naps to hit the stores in a collective hunt for deals on the toys, clothes, electronics and all sorts of gifts that will soon find their way under a Christmas tree.

But for plenty of hard-working Americans, that moment to splurge doesn't come until long after we've rung in the new year. And the gifts are distinctly more utilitarian - new tires for a run-down car, replacement eyeglasses, a trip to the dentist.

It is all thanks to an extra spending boost provided by the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. Those programs provide a federal tax credit for individuals and families who

are working hard, but don't earn much money. Together, those two programs have served as one of the most effective anti-poverty programs in the nation. They're also set to expire in 2017.

As the newly appointed chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-The Woodlands, has the opportunity to permanently extend the EITC and CTC by bundling those tax credits for the working poor with proposed extensions on businesses tax cuts. In a Congress that feels permanently confounded by gridlock, this tit for tat could serve as the healthy sort of horse-trading that's traditionally made our two-party system function.

Both President Barack Obama and Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis, have floated budget proposals that expand the EITC, including similar provisions to help workers without children. Even Texas' own U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz has said during his campaign for the Republican presidential nomination that he wants to expand the two tax credit programs.

It should be no surprise that support for the EITC and CTC can be found all across the political spectrum. A growing body of research has found that providing financial rewards to low-income workers results in a litany of social and economic benefits. Studies have found connections between a family receiving EITC and improved infant health, better school performance, greater college enrollment, and increased work and earnings for the next generation. That extra cash that working parents receive helps them build the sort of stable household that leads to healthy, productive children. The additional money also encourages nonworking single parents to enter the workforce by incentivizing labor that otherwise would be too low-wage to justify time away from home, family and other domestic duties.

The programs don't provide that much: The average EITC payout is about \$3,000 per year and the CTC provides up to \$1,000 per year for each child under 17 years old. As an example, a mother with two kids working full-time at the federal minimum wage - earning \$14,500 - would receive a refund of \$2,000 under the CTC and \$5,548 from the EITC, according to the IRS e-file calculator. And unlike other tax credits, the funds only reach the people who need the most help, phasing out benefits as people make more money.

Overall, those two programs helped to lift 9.4 million people out of poverty in 2013, and gave a hand up to 22 million more.

This holiday season, there will be plenty of sales and advertisements to help get people out of their homes and into shopping mode. But before anyone can think about gifts, they need to know that they'll have the cash on hand to repair a broken car, pay for rent or buy school supplies.

Those low rungs of our nation's economic ladder are some of the hardest to climb, and sometimes people just need a little help to get started.

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/opinion/outlook/article/Preserve-anti-poverty-tax-credits-6665907.php>

Houston Chronicle: Preserve anti-poverty tax credits (Op-ed)

By Cacie Waters

December 1, 2015

My mom was a single mother who worked full-time, sometimes holding more than one job, to provide for my twin brother, Clay, and me. Although she worked long hours, her income was still low. She earned barely enough to stay above the poverty line while living paycheck to paycheck. This day-to-day struggle became increasingly difficult when Clay and I entered high school.

When income tax season rolled around, my mom qualified for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). These pro-work tax credits meant my mother could schedule our doctor visits and eye exams, and purchase a desperately needed new set of tires for her car. She even used some money toward payment on a used car so Clay and I could get back and forth to work.

Unfortunately, my story of growing up is not an anomaly: It's the reality that is poverty among low-income working families in America.

New poverty data from the 2014 U.S. Census shows that 46.7 million Americans were still living in poverty that year, including 15 million children.

The Census data also revealed that in 2014 alone, the EITC and CTC lifted 9.8 million people out of poverty, 5.2 million of them children. The Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit are two of our most effective tools in the fight against poverty.

For many low-income working families, these tax credits provide funds for emergency situations, or purchases that have been put on hold because families simply do not have the money. The EITC and CTC mean parents can pay for medical exams, dental visits, eyeglasses and school fees for their children. It means a family can pay for appliance repairs and new tires that have taken a back seat while they try to make ends meet day-today.

The assistance and security my mother received through the EITC and CTC prevented my family from falling into poverty. I remember how excited I felt when I was accepted to my dream university

— University of Texas at Austin. But it was quickly replaced with anxiety about how I was going to afford the tuition. The addition of a second car my senior year of high school allowed me to find a job, save the money I earned and put it toward college expenses. My brother, Clay, was also able to get a job, attend college and earn his degree at Sam Houston State University. We are the first of our family to graduate from college. I can confidently say that our success in school and ability to stay above the poverty line, rather than falling below it, is in part due to the EITC and CTC benefits my mother received.

However, critical provisions to the EITC and CTC are set to expire in 2017. If this happens, 16 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty. Texas alone will see a harsh impact: Nearly 1.5 million families and more than 2.9 million children will be affected. More than 1.8 million people will be pushed into poverty or deeper into poverty, 915,000 of them children. The critical provisions of the EITC and CTC must be protected. The EITC and CTC are not a hand out, they are a hand up. Clay and I are proof of that.

Congress can make sure protecting low-income working American families is a priority in tax legislation this year. I urge Texas U.S. Sens. John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, newly appointed House Ways and Means Chairman, U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, R-The Woodlands, and the entire Texas delegation to show their support for America's low-income working families by demanding tax leaders in Congress save the EITC and CTC provisions now. Texas' working families — families like mine — are counting on it.

Waters is a resident of Magnolia.

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2015/12/04/1-urge-congress.html>

Columbus Dispatch (OH): Urge Congress to save critical tax credits

December 4, 2015

As we look forward to more holidays where we will spend time with family and friends and continue to celebrate our blessings, we must remember that 1 in 7 Americans today struggles to put food on the table all year long.

Pro-work tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit are a critical boost. In 2014 alone, these tax credits lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children.

When Congress returns from break, congressional leaders are pushing to make certain business-tax breaks permanent. Meanwhile, critical EITC and CTC provisions are set to expire soon. If this happens, 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, could be forced into or put deeper into poverty. Any legislative agreement that makes business-tax breaks permanent should permanently extend the EITC and CTC provisions.

I urge our representatives and senators to save these expiring provisions before it's too late.

RUTH ANN FARTHING

Columbus

<http://www.abqjournal.com/685753/news/some-brief-stories-from-a-few-readers-who-got-a-helping-hand.html>

Albuquerque Journal (NM): Readers who found a way out of poverty (Article)

By Dan Herrera / Editorial Page Editor

December 4, 2015

This is the second of three UpFront columns in which I step aside to let Journal readers – your neighbors – tell their own brief stories about positive lessons they learned while growing up in poverty and the difference it made in their lives.

While each person's life and situation is unique, I hope presenting these stories offers inspiration to all and perhaps some hope for those who might be going through similar circumstances.

The final column with selected stories will be published on Dec. 18. To read the already published stories, [click here](#). To read the column in which I invited readers to send in their stories, [click here](#).



Andy Trujillo, who grew up in a poor family in the South Valley, credits support from friends and church with helping him lift himself out of poverty. (Roberto E. Rosales/Albuquerque Journal)

Quelites in the Valley

There were many days when my younger brother and I would look at my grandma and wonder why we couldn't eat dinner. We didn't understand her struggle in trying to provide for us.

I understand now that food stamps helped us get through most of those times, but it wasn't always enough. My brother and I would often climb trees to gather eggs just for a meal. We'd walk the streets of the South Valley picking quelites to give the beans some extra flavor. (Note: Quelites is a spinach-like wild green plant.)

We lived in poverty, but it was a result of at least a few generations of addiction, abuse and general neglect; a hole that some in my family have yet to climb out of. I got out because I had support. My support came from great friends, church and urgency to get out. So I got out.

Today I have a wonderful job that I love, and most importantly, I have a beautiful 9-year-old daughter who will not have to go through what I did. I am also making my way through college while working full time and volunteering with RESULTS, a group with programs that helped me so much as I was growing up.

Now, I want to be an inspiration and voice for the many children and teens out there who feel like they're at a dead end; something that poverty brings and something that can be stopped.

– **Andy Trujillo**

<http://m.deseretnews.com/article/865643006/Congress-should-act.html?pg=all>

Deseret News (UT): Congress should act

December 4, 2015

During Thanksgiving, we took stock of what we're thankful for and look forward to a holiday season filled with family and friends. But 1 in 7 Americans today struggles to put food on the table, not just at Thanksgiving but all year long. Fortunately, pro-work tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are a critical boost — in 2014 alone, these tax credits lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty, including 5.2 million children.

Congress is wrapping up their work for the year, and congressional leaders are pushing to make certain business tax breaks permanent. Meanwhile, critical EITC and CTC provisions are set to expire soon. If this happens, 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, could be forced into or become deeper in poverty. Any legislative agreement that makes business tax breaks permanent also must permanently extend the EITC and CTC provisions.

During this holiday season, congress should put working families first. I urge our representatives and senators to save the expiring EITC and CTC provisions, before it's too late.

Shelly Parkin

West Jordan

<http://www.gazettechicago.com/index/2015/12/letter-end-hunger-poverty-and-provide-opportunity/>

Chicago Gazette: End hunger, poverty and provide opportunity

December 3, 2015

Dear Editor:

Advocacy organizations such as Bread for the World, Feeding America, and RESULTS are asking: “What are presidential candidates willing to do to end hunger, alleviate poverty, and increase economic opportunity?”

Presidential and Congressional leadership needs to better address the needs of low and moderate income working families and individuals. Researchers from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) note that these families and individuals have only recently begun to recover from the recession of 2008.

People who benefit from two critical programs for low and modest income working families and individuals, The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), may face deeper hardship if key provisions to the EITC and CTC expire at the end of 2017. Saving these key provisions needs to be on the top of the Congressional agenda and deserves continued bi-partisan support.

In the State of Illinois 445,000 families and 904,000 children will be affected if these tax credit provisions expire. Estimates of dollars lost in Illinois would be \$482 million, with 29,000 military families, 67,000 rural families, and 226,000 millennial workers affected.

On a national level the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) notes that 50 million workers will lose part or all of their Earned Income Tax Credit, or Child Tax Credit if key provisions are not extended.

Let’s not force working families to wait until the last minute for Congress to do what’s right. Congress should make the EITC and CTC provisions permanent now and then spend the next twelve months of national debate creating an effective plan to end poverty in America.

Let’s not lose sight of these programs during the next twelve months of national debate!

Joyce Weber, LCSW

RESULTS Advocate

<http://www.southwhidbeyrecord.com/opinion/letters/359706411.html>

South Whidbey Record (WA): Tax credits can combat hunger on South End, nation

Editor,

With record numbers of people still using the food bank ('Need for support remains at food bank,' *The Record*, Nov. 27) what can be done?

One way to make sure it doesn't get worse is to ask our representatives and senators to make sure the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit are made permanent. These two tax credits provide ladders out of poverty to millions of Americans. Congressman Rick Larsen, a Second District Democrat, and Congresswoman Suzan DelBene, a First District Democrat, work hard to help all Americans but need the extra power of our voices to assist them.

Write a letter or make a call and ask them to make these tax cuts permanent.

WILLIE DICKERSON

Snohomish

<http://www.heraldonline.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article47920245.html>

Rock Hill Herald (SC): Extend tax credits for working poor

December 5, 2015

The face of poverty is not what you expect since 2008. It is my face or your neighbor's face. As a military wife and now as a divorcee, financial struggle is familiar to me and others.

New census data shows that one in seven people, one in five children, live at or below the poverty line. Many of these Americans work 40 hours a week and support their families.

As we face another budget talk and the prospect of businesses having tax cuts extended or made permanent, the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit should be extended and made permanent, as well.

The EITC and the Child Tax Credit are pro-work credits. They were instrumental in raising 9.2 million people, including 5.2 million children, out of poverty in 2014. These credits have been championed by Republicans and Democrats, including House Speaker Paul Ryan, who has stated that the plan in his budget calls to expand these tax credits to working individuals ages 21 and up.

As a divorced parent of three special-needs children, these tax credits assist families like mine afford the unknown expenses of their care or to fill the gap in my wages when I have to miss work to tend to their needs.

We have to send a message to our congressional leaders that we need to look at policy that can help Americans, including fixing the gap in EITC by expanding it for adults without children in the home. This should include empty-nesters, the only population in the U.S. tax code taxed into poverty.

Now is the chance for Americans to remind Congress that families and the American worker should come first in all discussions when considering tax credits and breaks for corporations.

Yolanda M. Gordon

Fort Mill

<http://www.idahostatesman.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article48287810.html>

Idaho Statesman (ID): Help the children

December 5, 2015

The season of giving draws ever closer and while we donate our turkeys and volunteer our time, there are still children who fall into the gap. Here in Idaho thousands of children are at risk of falling below or deeper into poverty this holiday season. Take a moment from your busy schedule of good cheer to contact your representatives and senators about expanding and protecting these children who are most vulnerable among us. Tell them to protect SNAP for children so that their families may yet celebrate the holidays, tell them to expand and protect the EITC and CTC so that these children may yet have a Christmas this year. Don't let Idaho's children go without this holiday season, help make sure they have access to the hand-ups that allow them to have the joy of Christmas just the same as your children.

ANNAMARIE MOREHEAD, MELBA

http://www.santafenewmexican.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letters-to-the-editor-december/article_e59b9e61-4387-5a60-be0a-01cc30b88b60.html

December 10, 2015

Santa Fe New Mexican (NM): Protecting tax credits

I am thankful for the actions of Democratic Sens. Tom Udall, Martin Heinrich and U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján, all of whom have signed on to the Senate/House bills that would make permanent key provisions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credits. If allowed to expire, they would push 16.4 million people in the U.S. into or deeper into poverty. In New Mexico, 220,000 households receive EITC at tax time. They then put back into New Mexico's economy \$511 million as they pay bills, shop for clothes for their kids and pay for auto repairs. Please remember in your giving this holiday season the many organizations serving people who are hungry and living in poverty. And please thank our members of Congress for demonstrating, by protecting the EITC and CTC, their concern for hardworking people in our state who struggle to provide for their families.

Judith Beery

Santa Fe

<http://www.centralmaine.com/2015/12/11/congress-must-renew-fix-pro-work-tax-credits/>

Kennebec Journal (ME): Congress must renew, fix pro-work tax credits

December 11, 2015

As the holiday season approaches, Congress is negotiating a new tax deal before members head home to their states and districts.

They are contemplating billions of dollars in tax breaks for businesses, but they must prioritize hardworking low-income young adults and families. The Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit are pro-work tax credits for low- and moderate-income workers. However, key provisions of the two tax credits are temporary, and policymakers must act now to ensure that 37,000 families in Maine continue to receive essential benefits. If key provisions expire, 34,000 Mainers, including 16,000 children, will be pushed into, or deeper into, poverty.

Lawmakers should use this opportunity to address a glaring hole in the Earned Income Tax Credit that affects millions of workers, including young workers like many of my peers. Under current federal tax policy, low-income adults without children, including noncustodial parents, are the only workers taxed into, or deeper into, poverty. In 2012, federal income and payroll taxes pushed 1.2 million childless workers into poverty and another 5.8 million deeper into poverty.

Paul Ryan, the new Republican speaker of the House, and President Barack Obama agree that the age of eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit should be lowered from 25 to 21 and the maximum credit should be increased. If Congress closes this gap, 13.5 million childless workers nationwide, including 64,000 young adults in Maine, would become eligible for the credit or receive a larger one.

Evidence demonstrates that the Earned Income Tax Credit boosts employment, increases financial stability and strengthens the economy, putting \$206 million into Maine's economy in 2012. Congress must act now to save key provisions of these tax credits and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit for childless adults. Our delegation should be champions for this cause.

Susan Fleurant

Waterville

<http://themercury.com/articles/put-working-families-first-save-essential-tax-credits>

Manhattan Mercury (KS): Put working families first; save essential tax credits

December 12, 2015

During the holiday season, we take stock of what we're thankful for and look forward to time with family and friends. But 1 in 7 Americans today struggles to put food on the table during the holidays and beyond.

Fortunately, pro-work tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) are a critical boost; in 2014 alone, these tax credits lifted 9.8 million Americans — including 5.2 million children — out of poverty.

Congress is wrapping up its work for the year, and Congressional leaders are pushing a tax deal to make certain business breaks permanent.

Luckily, there is momentum to include critical EITC and CTC provisions set to expire soon if Congress does not make these provisions permanent. If that happens, 16 million Americans, including 8 million children, could be forced into poverty or deeper into poverty.

Any legislative agreement that makes business tax breaks permanent also must permanently extend the EITC and CTC provisions — and Congress should make it a priority to move a fair tax deal forward.

During this holiday season, Congress should put working families first.

I urge Sens. Pat Roberts and Jerry Moran to save the expiring EITC and CTC provisions before it's too late, continuing their legacy of supporting working Kansans.

Garrett Wilkinson
